

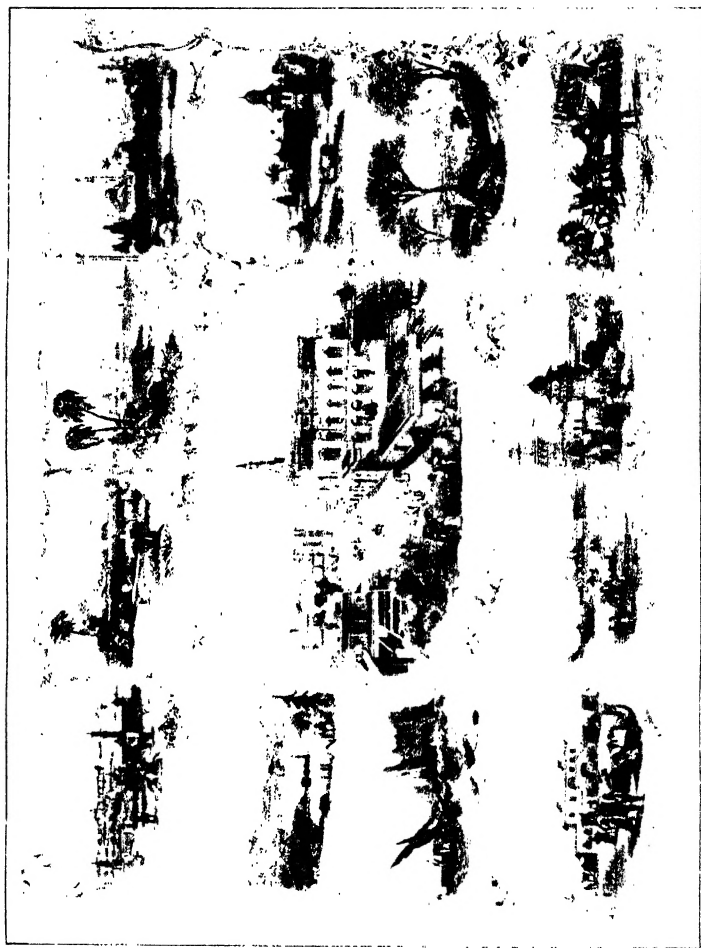
**BRITISH ROUTES
TO INDIA**

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Scenes Illustrating the Overland Route about 1855

BRITISH ROUTES TO INDIA

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BRITISH ROUTES TO INDIA

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PREFACE

THE solicitude of the great nations of Europe for the countries lying at the eastern end of the Mediterranean has been a conspicuous feature of European international relations ever since the rise of the chronic Eastern Question. While the motives of the Powers concerned with this problem have been various, the Question was fundamentally due to the existence of certain broad natural highways leading from the Mediterranean toward the jealously guarded confines of India. It was the decadence of the Mohammedan states lying athwart these highways, coincident with the phenomenal development of western Europe, which made the Near and Middle East the scene of such fierce European rivalry during the nineteenth century. The political difficulties arising in these areas have been studied from sundry points of view, but scant attention has been devoted to the simultaneous development of lines of communication along these natural routes. The early instances of the use of the shorter routes for purposes of communication were as unimpressive as the casual trading voyages of the late eighteenth century with which they began. But European imperialism presently added vast significance to these routes and definite lines of access were projected and developed, which, in addition to economic and social uses in times of peace, would serve military purposes in times of war and political objects on all occasions.

The recounting of these developments has supplied a theme large for the space limits assigned to it. Much pertinent material has necessarily been omitted, and matters with which the reader is likely to be more or less familiar have been greatly abridged. For the same reason, only the most requisite or suggestive of the sources consulted have been cited. If the account thus lacks some of the elements of completeness, it may still suffice to throw new and interesting light on the international bearings of the routes described, and on the foreign policy of Great Britain in particular.

In the course of this work, I have frequently been placed under obligation for courtesies rendered. I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to those in charge of the British Museum and the

Public Record Office in London, and in particular to Sir William Foster, late Historiographer of the India Office, for valuable assistance. Several English commercial houses with Eastern interests have kindly furnished information which could not otherwise have been obtained. In this regard, Mr. Francis W. Parry, Secretary of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, has been most considerate in supplying both information and photographs of scenes of the Company's activities. To my much-tried friend and former teacher, Professor William E. Lingelbach, of the University of Pennsylvania, I am especially grateful for practical counsel and hearty encouragement since this work was first undertaken. I have been fortunate in having the benefit of some very timely suggestions from Professor Charles K. Webster, of the University of Wales. Professor Wilbur C. Abbott, of Harvard University, made some valuable comments on the book in one of its early stages, as did the late Professor Archibald Cary Coolidge, of Harvard. Also I wish to thank President John A. Cousens, of Tufts College, for appreciative and generous co-operation. These kindnesses and others unrecorded have been as oases in the deserts of doubt and difficulty through which one must travel who seeks to explore the past.

HALFORD LANCASTER HOSKINS

WEST SOMFREVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
August, 1928

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BRITISH ROUTES
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CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH INTEREST IN EGYPT

ONE OF the most striking characteristics of early modern times was the rapid and extensive development of European overseas trade. This revolution in commerce, marking the emergence of the modern nation-state from the confusion of mediæval times, has had a profound influence on the whole of the modern era. The world of the twentieth century has learned to trace from the commercial movement of the sixteenth the colonizing activities of the seventeenth, the overseas wars of conquest of the eighteenth, and the industrial revolution and economic imperialism of the nineteenth century.

The appetites created by early commercial growth found greatest satisfaction in the wares of the Orient, and thence the trading fleets of the West quickly found their way. From the voyages of circumnavigation of Drake and Cavendish until the beginning of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the British were accustomed to approach their commercial domain in India by way of the Cape of Good Hope.¹ First contacts with India, however, had been established by way of the Mediterranean; and since these early ventures exerted a certain influence on the reëstablishment of contacts between India and England much later by this channel, it will be worth while briefly to review early activities in the eastern Mediterranean area.

English traders had made no especial attempt to secure a share of European trade prior to 1500. The beginning of the sixteenth century found England for the first time in a position to cast her

¹ H. G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings in Western India*, 1579-1657 (Oxford, 1920), p. 22, *passim*; J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez* (2 vols., Paris, 1901), I, 32-46.

bread upon the waters. The Hundred Years' War with France had resulted in the loss of English continental possessions where strength and fortune might be dissipated, and the end of the Wars of the Roses had given the country a centralized government under a dynasty which was not averse from innovations. The sea, therefore, began to offer an outlet for surplus wealth and energy, and as the century advanced small and clumsy craft ventured down the coast of Europe and into the Mediterranean, where they caused no little worry to the Spanish, French and Venetians who were already on the scene.

This Mediterranean trade is interesting, both because of its nature² and because it led to the first English diplomatic establishments in the Levant. To the eastern shores of the Mediterranean various kinds of oriental goods still found their laborious way by the routes which had been employed to some extent since mediæval and perhaps since ancient times.³ The all-sea route to the sources of these oriental products was known but it was not attempted by English mariners until near the end of the sixteenth century because of the numerous hazards from natural forces and from hostile Hispanic fleets. The appetite created by these tastes of eastern wares led to the beginning of English diplomatic relations with the Turkish Empire. In the sixteenth century the favor of the Grand Seignior was courted by the representatives of several nations, not only because the Turkish Empire had not then entered upon a serious decline, but also because it controlled the existing overland trade routes to the Orient. At the outset, French agents, stoutly supported by their government and abetted by the Venetians, succeeded in greatly embarrassing the English Levant Company and in limiting its trading privileges. But the recognition of William Harborne as English Ambassador by the Sultan in 1583⁴ marks the beginning of an important epoch in English relations with the East. Harborne and his immediate successors, Edward Barton and Henry Lello, had hard shift to uphold the interests of their countrymen; but they succeeded at last in firmly establishing English influence at Constantinople,⁵ and

² The character of the Mediterranean trade is well shown by entries in the *Calendar of State Papers*, Domestic Series, CLV, and Venetian Series, 1592-1603. See Mordecai Epstein, *Early History of the Levant Company* (London, 1908), pp. 6, 52.

³ H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World to the Fall of Rome* (2d ed., London, 1926).

⁴ Harborne was sent out and maintained by the Levant Company, although he was accredited by the Queen's government. — Epstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

⁵ *Cal. of St. Pap.*, Venetian, 1592-1603, pp. vii, xlv, and Nos. 131, 191, 501, 641, 662; *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1599-1603, p. 339; *Historical Manuscripts Commission Publications*, XXXVII, 202.

except for a few brief estrangements, it was not seriously disturbed until late in the nineteenth century.

As the sixteenth century drew toward a close, the Mediterranean trade no longer sufficed as a source of eastern goods for English markets. Having discovered their ability to compete on even terms with their European contemporaries, the English began to experience an urge to trace eastern products to their sources. Then ensued one series after another of attempts to reach the eastern shores of Asia by routes other than the preëempted one around the Cape of Good Hope. One after another of these, the northeast, northwest, and southeast, passages were tried and abandoned, either because of physical obstructions or over-great distance.⁶ Journeys overland to India from the eastern Mediterranean resulted in the gaining of much useful information, but failed to disclose practicable trade routes in the then political state of the countries of western Asia and the means of transportation available.⁷ The first tentative ventures to the East around the tip of Africa, however, disclosed so much of the decline of Hispanic power and opened up such an amazing source of wealth, that at the close of the century the English largely abandoned the lucrative Mediterranean trade for the more dangerous but much more lucrative trade by the all-sea route. The success of this shift in interest was assured by the chartering of the East India Company on December 31, 1600. Thenceforward the Cape route was the English route to the East *par excellence*, and it remained so until the many changes due to the Industrial Revolution effected a return of lines of communication and trade to the Mediterranean in the nineteenth century.

English absorption in the all-sea route to India militated against the vigorous maintenance of interests in the Levant, and for the greater part of two centuries Englishmen were content to trade under the Capitulations issued in 1604, which conceded to the English most of the privileges which had been granted to the French in 1535, that is, the right of trading in all Ottoman ports under their own flag.⁸ During most of this time England did not

⁶ The accounts of the pathfinding voyages of such discoverers as Willoughby and Chancellor, Gilbert, Frobisher and Davis, Hawkins, Drake and Cavendish, are detailed in Samuel Purchas' *Pilgrimes*.

⁷ It would seem, however, that the information gained as a result of the Newbery-Fitch expedition and the journeys of Mildenhall, William Hawkins, Finch, the Shirley brothers, and others was responsible to a large degree for the first voyages made to India around the Cape of Good Hope. See Rawlinson, *British Beginnings*, pp. 21-51; (Sir) William Foster, *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619* (Oxford, 1921), *Parliamentary Paper*, 1834, No. 478, Appendix 8, p. 17; Sir Austen Henry Layard in the *Quarterly Review*, CII, 363-364.

⁸ William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors, 1801-1922* (Cam-

regularly maintain consular officials in Egypt and in Syria, and such small commercial interests as remained in the ports of the Ottoman Empire were usually left in the hands of Italians.⁹ Meanwhile, the factors of the East India Company at Bombay had found profit in approaching the western shores of Asia from the East. Toward the close of the seventeenth century, English vessels crossed the Arabian Sea, entered the Red Sea, and at Mocha purchased quantities of Arabian coffee on very favorable terms. It was this advance toward Europe from the Orient which first suggested the expediency of establishing connections between England and the southern coasts of Asia by a passage through Egypt.

In 1698 one Henry Tistew, who had formerly been English Consul at Tripoli in Syria, passed through Egypt and made his way down the Red Sea and thence to Surat with the idea of developing a trade route through Egypt and the Red Sea.¹⁰ He was foiled in this principally by the Ottoman ban on the navigation of the Red Sea north of the port of Jeddah by all Christian vessels because of the proximity of the Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca.¹¹ But the trade in coffee between Jeddah, Mocha, and Bombay in English and in native vessels flourished, and during at least a part of the eighteenth century it was sufficient to warrant the maintenance by the East India Company of an English resident at Mocha.¹²

After having become masters of the ocean passage to India, the English had little desire to return to the Mediterranean. The route by way of the Cape of Good Hope served sufficiently well both for the exchanging of messages and the transportation of goods. Moreover, it had the considerable additional advantage after the early years of the seventeenth century of being closed to other Europeans or even to English interlopers.¹³ What matter, then, if the French held sway in the eastern Mediterranean, as

bridge, Eng., 1923), p. 2; E. Driault, *La Question d'Orient depuis ses Origines jusqu'à la Paix de Sévres* (1920) (8th ed., Paris, 1921); E. A. Freeman, *The Ottoman Power in Europe* (London, 1877); C^{te} A. de la Jonquière, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* (Rev. ed., 2 vols., Paris, 1914), I.

⁹ Paul Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant au Dix-septième Siècle* (Paris, 1896); François Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez, et l'Égypte au XVIII^e Siècle* (Paris, 1922), pp. 2 ff.

¹⁰ Despatch from Benoist de Maillet, French consul at Cairo, to the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles, 10 Mar., 1698; quoted in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹¹ Strictly speaking, Christians were forbidden to enter the Red Sea further than the port of Mocha, but the trade to Jeddah was tolerated by the local chiefs. See Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 42, *passim*.

¹² F. Charles-Roux, *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte* (Paris, 1910), p. 29; *L'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez, et l'Égypte*, pp. 8 ff. Charles-Roux in this latter work has made an excellent study of the beginnings of French and English relations in the Near East up to the interruption caused by the French expedition in 1798.

¹³ Except, of course, those licensed by the Crown, of which there were altogether too many for the best interests of the old East India Company.

long as the Red Sea remained closed to Christian trade? Prior to 1770, the only occasions on which English representatives in the Levant displayed noticeable interest in a route to India by way of Suez was at such times as other nations, the Austrians or the French, were suspected of planning to make use of this line.¹⁴ The old Levant Company meanwhile had so far declined that, as far as Egypt was concerned, English trade was practically at a standstill. French interests were increasing in the Near East, those of the English in the countries beyond.

Shortly after the middle of the eighteenth century began a remarkable series of events which quickly combined to alter permanently the political and commercial complexion of the region of the eastern Mediterranean. In 1766, Ali Bey, one of the twenty-four Mameluke Beys of Egypt, asserted his supremacy over his fellows, and by dint of assassination and exile established it. He sent the Pasha of Cairo back to Constantinople, refused to pay tribute to the Ottoman Government, established his own coinage, and assumed the title of Sultan of Egypt. Almost at one stroke, Egypt became, to all intents and purposes, independent. Ali Bey was destined to enjoy his supremacy but a brief time, but his example found imitators. For the next quarter of a century Egypt remained in successful rebellion, and gave every appearance of having entirely escaped from the suzerainty of the Sultan.¹⁵

This internal situation in Egypt coincided with a succession of wars between Turkey on the one hand and Russia and Austria on the other, in which the former was seriously worsted. The European wars of Turkey, together with the situation in Egypt and in India, gave rise to new and far-reaching ideas in France and England. The French Government, believing the partition of the Ottoman Empire to be at hand, conceived the idea of securing a share of the spoils and acquiring compensation for the recent loss of territories in India by seizing Egypt at some moment of internal confusion.¹⁶ England also was attracted, but differently, by the situation. Having been unable to open a communication through the Red Sea at an earlier date because of the Turkish prohibition, it now appeared a feasible matter to accomplish this purpose by negotiation with the Egyptian Beys.¹⁷

Two methods were available for undertaking to establish re-

¹⁴ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 13-15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ Charles-Roux traces the expedition of Bonaparte to this persistent idea. See his *Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte*, pp. 28 ff.

¹⁷ State Papers, Turkey, Letters from John Murray, 13 Nov., 1768 to 3 July, 1770; cited in Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 22, 25.

lations between Europe and India by way of Egypt. One was to approach the Porte, as the sovereign power, for the necessary authorization; the other was to take up the matter with the local authorities. The French had generally favored the former policy from the days of Louis XIV.¹⁸ The English, after 1770, preferred the latter, and during the troublous times that followed the *coup d'état* of Ali Bey in 1766, they had, for the time being, an open field for diplomacy in Egypt.¹⁹

Definite projects for the utilization of Egypt for purposes of trade and communication began with the arrival at Alexandria in June, 1768, of James Bruce, lately English Consul at Algiers. On his way to Asia *via* the Red Sea, he examined Egypt with a critical eye. He was astonished to find that none of his countrymen was established in Egypt at the time. To pave the way for English enterprise, Bruce conferred with Ali Bey, talked with the merchants of various European countries, visited upper Egypt and Egyptian Red Sea ports, and finally, in May, 1769, proceeded to Jeddah. Here he found two English merchant vessels from India, the *Merchant of Bengal*, commanded by Capt. Cuthbert Thornhill, and the *Lion*, in charge of Captain Thomas Price, of Bombay. Both men were deeply interested in the possibilities of opening up trade with Egypt, because they considered themselves imposed on by the excessive customs duties levied on them at Arabian ports.²⁰ A plan was therefore concerted between Bruce and Thornhill, whereby the former, returning to Cairo by way of upper Egypt, should attempt to conclude a commercial treaty with the Bey, while the latter, on his next voyage from Bengal, would sail to Suez.²¹

Before Bruce again reached Cairo, Ali Bey, guided partly by his own commercial instinct and partly by the arguments of a Venetian merchant, Carlo Rosetti, had already opened the port of Suez and had embarked on a career of conquest in Arabia. In this undertaking he was prompted less, perhaps, by a desire to control the Holy Places and the important markets of Mocha and Jeddah than to effect a return of the European trade around the

¹⁸ See G. Poignant, in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, XXXV, 265 ff.; *British and Foreign State Papers*, IV, No. 732; *Quart. Rev.*, XXVI, 444-445.

¹⁹ Charles-Roux insists that the idea of developing a route through Egypt was originally and essentially French, because of the character of their activities in Turkey and in Egypt in the sixteenth century.

²⁰ This is borne out by the correspondence exchanged between the Government of Bengal and the Pasha of Jeddah in 1773-1774.—Imperial Record Department, *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, (Calcutta, 1925), IV, 21, 107, 122, *passim*.

²¹ James Bruce, *Travels . . . to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768-1773* (5 vols., Edinburgh, 1790), I, 70 ff.; Alexander Murray, *Account of the Life and Writings of James Bruce, of Kinnaird*. . . (Edinburgh and London, 1808), pp. 61-67, 111, 112.

Cape of Good Hope to its former direct channels. At the same time he despatched a "very sensible letter" to the Governor of Bengal, pointing out the manifold advantages of opening a trade to Egypt.²² This was sufficient encouragement to bring about the formation at Calcutta by Capt. Thornhill and some of his associates of a small joint stock company for the trade to Egypt, the first dividends to be paid upon the return of the first vessel from Suez.²³ While this group were preparing for a voyage to Suez, Warren Hastings, who had just come out to Bengal as Governor-General, despatched a note, with suitable presents, to Ali Bey, expressing appreciation for the invitation to trade, and assuring him that a vessel would be sent to Egypt the next year.²⁴

About the same time it occurred to the Governor-General that the route through the Red Sea and across Egypt might prove convenient for the transmission of despatches.²⁵ Finding that the Bengal merchants, Capt. Thornhill, and some of his former associates in the trade to Mocha and Jeddah, Robert Halford and David Killican, were projecting a trading voyage to Suez, Hastings gave them all encouragement. On November 18, 1773, he wrote the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London, that —

The President [*i.e.*, of the Bengal Presidency] informs the Board that Messrs. Thornhill, Halford, and Killikan, having sometime ago communicated to him the plan of a voyage to Suez, he was induced by the Prospects which the introduction of this new and hitherto untried Channel of Trade afforded him both of improving the General Commerce of these Provinces and of establishing a new and continual communication of Letters with the Honble. Court in England, to take a concern in it.²⁶

²² British Museum, Additional Manuscripts, 29210, Folios 428, 429, "Proposals for a commerce to Suez"; cited by Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 33.

²³ Brit. Mus., Add. Mss., 29210, Fos., 426, 426d; cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

²⁴ *Cal. of Per. Corres.*, IV, 21; George Baldwin, "The Communication with India by the Isthmus of Suez, vindicated from the prejudices which have prevailed against it" (1784), in India Office, Factory Records, Egypt and Red Sea, vol. 5.

²⁵ George Baldwin, later an official agent in Egypt, claimed credit for being the first to suggest the use of the route through Egypt for despatches. See his *Political Recollections relative to Egypt; Containing Observations on Its Government under the Mamelukes, Its Geographical Position; — Its Intrinsic and Extrinsic Resources; — Its Relative Importance to England and France; and Its Dangers to England in the Possession of France* (London, 1801), p. 65, and Col. James Capper, *Observations on the Passage to India through Egypt and across the Great Desert* (London, 1784), Introduction.

²⁶ I. O., Factory Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5; Extract of a Bengal Public Consultation, 18 Nov., 1773.

This action was approved by the Court, who suggested that the Governor-General place a schooner at the service of the merchants to accompany their trading vessel and to make a survey of the Red Sea, "that navigation being hitherto unknown."

The approval and suggestions of the London authorities was anticipated by the Governor-General, who placed a small vessel, the *Culladore*, at the service of the merchants, and wished their venture *bon voyage* before hearing from London. But Fate did not smile on this pioneering expedition. Shortly after the departure of the two vessels from Calcutta early in 1774, Hastings was compelled to record in another letter to the home authorities that "soon after the departure of these vessels, they were overtaken by a Violent Gale of Wind in the Bay, in which the [trading] ship received great damage . . . and the Schooner has not since been heard of."²⁷

Under a less vigorous Indian administration than that of Warren Hastings, this might well have ended the whole plan for officially utilizing the Red Sea and the overland passage through Egypt. But while the incident was discouraging, it merely gave him time for maturing his arrangements for subsequent voyages through Egypt. He wrote almost at once to Ali Bey, informing him of the disaster and promising another vessel in another year.²⁸ The opening up of the Egyptian route, Hastings wrote to the home authorities, he considered a matter of "great public utility." After some vessels had successfully made the voyage to the Red Sea, in 1775 he despatched agents to Cairo to arrange, if possible, for privileges of trade from India and for a regular system of communication through Egypt. The proposed treaty provided for "a reciprocal and entirely perfect liberty of navigation and commerce between the subjects on each part, through all and every the Dominions and Provinces under their Government in India and Egypt, concerning all and singular kinds of goods. . . ." English merchant vessels were to pay anchorage charges in Egyptian ports, and goods brought in for sale were to pay customs duties of 6½% to 8%, but only after such goods were sold. Cairo was appointed as the Egyptian market.²⁹ This treaty, providing

²⁷ I. O. Records, *ut supra*; Extract of a General Letter from Bengal, 15 March, 1774.

²⁸ *Cal. of Per. Corres.*, IV, 155.

²⁹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, "Treaty of Navigation and Commerce between the Most Serene and Mahometan Bey of Upper and Lower Egypt, and the Honble. Warren Hastings, Esqr., President and Governor for Affairs of the British Nation in Bengal . . . concluded at Cairo the 7th day of March, 1775." See Le Baron I. de Testa, *Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottomane, avec les Puissances étrangères depuis le premier traité conclu en 1536 . . . jusqu'à nos jours* (6 vols., Paris, 1864), I, 482; J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez* (2 vols., Paris, 1901), I, Annexe 4.

greater sureties than previous irregular concessions, laid the basis for an extensive English trade in the months to come, regardless of the fact that without ratification by the Porte on the one hand and the British Government on the other the treaty could not be considered as binding.

Meanwhile, political conditions in Egypt and the Hedjaz had changed. The Arabs had driven the Egyptian garrisons out of Mecca and Jeddah, and had restored Ottoman authority. In Egypt itself Ali Bey had been overthrown by one of his lieutenants and had fled to Syria. The accession of the new Bey, Mohammed Abou Dahab, had disrupted the trade which was beginning to reach Egypt by way of the Red Sea. At this point, in January, 1773, James Bruce again reached Cairo, having experienced difficulties and dangers of all kinds during his return from Jeddah.⁸⁰ He was able, however, to ingratiate himself with the new despot, and to take up with him the matter of a definite arrangement under which English trade might continue, and to effect an agreement under which English goods should pay 8% customs duties instead of the 14% usually levied at Jeddah. The substance of this accord Bruce immediately communicated to Captains Thornhill and Price, whom he had met at Jeddah in 1769, and enclosed a copy of a *firman* issued by Mohammed Abou Dahab guaranteeing protection to English merchants. Other copies were sent to the Governors of Bengal and Bombay. Having thus succeeded, to all appearances, in his favorite project, Bruce left the further conduct of affairs in the hands of the Venetian Consul, and proceeded homeward to enlist the interest of the English Government in the new trade.

Bruce was less successful in England than he had been in Egypt. There he found Lord North's Government not only altogether unappreciative of his patriotic endeavors, but openly hostile. The commerce with Egypt by way of Suez, it was maintained, would result in positive disadvantage to the East India Company by carrying the trade of India out of the bounds of the Company's monopoly. But in addition to this, the trade would be dangerous, it was contended, because of the hostility of the Ottoman Porte to it.⁸¹ Deeply wounded at the lack of appreciation in England for his unselfish and hazardous endeavors, Bruce retired from the scene, unaware of the real influence of his work.

The response in India to the privileges he had been instru-

⁸⁰ Bruce, *op. cit.*, IV, 718; J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 94-95; Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230.

⁸¹ Bruce, *op. cit.*, IV, 730-731.

mental in securing was immediate. Merchant vessels laden in Indian ports, as if confident of the favorable result of the treaty drawn up by the Governor-General, made their appearance in the Red Sea almost as soon as the agreement was completed, and were soon unloading at Suez. Packets and despatches, brought on nearly every vessel, were promptly transported from Suez to Cairo and thence to Alexandria by special messengers. They reached Europe in some of the many vessels annually attracted to Alexandria, and reached England by a route leading from Trieste to the Channel ports.³² At first the new plan of communication, based on a coördination of trade and messenger service, gave great promise. During each of the three or four years following the Treaty of 1775, sailing vessels frequently arrived at Alexandria from England and at Suez from India at the same time.³³ The only difficulties in the way of these activities appeared to be the seasonable adverse winds of the Indian Ocean, the dangerous, uncharted shores of the Red Sea, and the great desert between Suez and Cairo. The political sky was serene. The strict injunction issued by the Porte in 1775 in contravention of this Christian invasion of the Red Sea, if known in India, was ignored while relations with the Beys remained good, and there is good reason to believe that the British Ambassador at the Porte, John Murray, had even neglected to apprise his Government of such Turkish protests.³⁴

It remained for George Baldwin, merchant and adventurer, to reap where his fellow countryman, Bruce, had sown.³⁵ This enterprising individual had been engaged in mercantile operations in the Levant since 1760 and had become acquainted with the remarkable resources of Egypt and with the peculiar advantages to be derived from a well-conducted line of communications through that country. Finding that there was not in Egypt at this period either an official or unofficial agent to care for English interests, Baldwin determined to assume charge of such matters himself, and during a brief visit to England he was able to secure official sanction of his plans.³⁶ He first secured recognition from the Levant Company, whose monopoly in the Near East still survived under the paternal care of the British Government. Learning of this, the Directors of the East India Company authorized him to act as their agent for communications as well, agreeing to pay ex-

³² Archives Affaires Étrangères, correspondance consulaire, cited in F. Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 52.

³³ Baldwin, *op. cit.*, p. 6; J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 100-101, 418.

³⁴ F. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.

³⁶ Baldwin, *op. cit.*, Preface.

penses, a small salary, and a bonus on each packet of correspondence safely expedited through Egypt. This commission Baldwin gladly accepted, and entered upon his new duties late in the summer of 1775.³⁷

The next two years were devoted quite largely to the problem of coördinating the sending of despatches from London and from the three Indian presidencies. A voyage from India to Suez was an exceedingly expensive, not to say hazardous, undertaking, and to realize the greatest degree of efficiency, a vessel bringing out despatches from India also had to carry papers of importance on the return journey. The working out of the scheme was greatly complicated by the fact that a safe and speedy voyage could be projected in either direction during only a few weeks of the year. Baldwin devoted much attention to matters of navigation in Indian seas and in the Mediterranean, and presently drew up a plan which seemed to offer most practical results. Allowing about twenty-five days for the sending of packets from Cairo to England, it was found that a speedy vessel arriving from India at the beginning of the open season might safely await replies from London before leaving Suez on the return journey. This arrangement proved to be so effective that by the year 1777 the India authorities both in England and in India were relying on this route for their most important communications, and a packet marked "received overland" was a signal for instant attention.³⁸

The new scheme was no sooner inaugurated than it was seriously threatened. Although the treaty between the Government of India and the Beys of Egypt was, strictly speaking, no violation of the Turkish Capitulations under which Englishmen had traded to the Levant for many generations, the Ottoman Porte looked with undisguised hostility on the trade to Suez, the benefits of which would redound to the semi-independent Beys rather than to the Porte and would tend to increase the Turkish administrative problems in Egypt.³⁹ Baldwin, assuming himself the credit for the opening of the traffic with Egypt, explained it thus:

The Turk, who had hitherto been silent, began to complain; the Daganier, or custom-master, wanted a participation

³⁷ I. O., Factory Records, Vol. 5, Correspondence of the East India House.

³⁸ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, East India Correspondence. The "overland" route had not at this time any particular reference to the use of any line from England across the continent to the Mediterranean as it had during part of the nineteenth century, although communications were frequently carried from Channel ports to Trieste or Marseilles, and *vice versa*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, "Translation of a Representation from the Ottoman Porte to His Britannick Majesty's Ambassador. Received May 5, 1777"; and Correspondence of the East India House.

in the customs; the sheriff of Mecca began to complain that the port of Gedda would be abandoned, and the cause of religion sustain an injury in its effects; the Directors of the East India Company complained that their trade would suffer; the Turkey Company cried out that they would be ruined.⁴⁰

The Court of Directors of the East India Company had been pleased at first at the prospect of a new line of communication, but they soon discovered that this would prove to be a very expensive matter unless developed in connection with the commercial opening of the Red Sea. Merchant vessels could carry messengers and packets to or from India as well as the Company's cruisers, and at no additional expense, while every voyage of an armed vessel with despatches alone cost the Company several thousand pounds sterling. But just as Hastings' treaty of 1775 succeeded in opening the way to Suez, the Company's Directors came to the conclusion that the Indo-Egyptian trade, far from being desirable, might easily become an unmixed evil. It occurred to the Directors that eastern goods ostensibly destined for consumption in Egypt might readily follow the new line of communications and find their way, possibly in the ships of the Levant Company, to European markets, and thus seriously compete with cargoes brought around by way of the Cape of Good Hope. So it was reluctantly decided that in the long run it would be better to forego the advantages of a regular line of communications *via* the Red Sea, if necessary, for the purpose of ending the Egyptian trade. They were, in consequence, quite willing to see the point of the Turkish Government when presently it was brought forcibly to their attention.⁴¹

At the close of 1775, Ambassador John Murray, a strong protagonist of the Egyptian trade and the route through Egypt, left Constantinople to return to London. He did not live to complete his journey; and his death at Venice prevented his making known to the English Government the antipathy with which the trade to Egypt was viewed by the Turks.⁴² Before the arrival of

⁴⁰ Baldwin, *op cit.*, p. 7.

⁴¹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Correspondence of the East India House.

⁴² Inasmuch as Murray had never despatched to London the prohibitory injunction issued by the Ottoman authorities some months earlier, and since the original of that document was not found in the British Embassy at Constantinople, it is supposed that he was bearing the document with him and that it was lost at the time of his death. — State Papers, Turkey, Vol. 53, reports from Sir Robert Ainslie, 14 March, 5 May, and 17 June, 1777; cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 52. I have relied on Charles-Roux's thorough study of the State Papers and their continuation in the Foreign Office Turkey Papers. My own original investigations of these activities have been made largely in the Factory Records of the India Office, most of which were unnumbered when I had access to them.

his successor at Constantinople, the English *chargé d'affaires*, Hayes, was compelled to report to his Government, while upholding English rights under the Capitulations, that the Turks were insistent on the ending of the Suez trade. This report was the first intimation received by the London authorities of the feeling at Constantinople on the Indo-Egyptian trade. The Turkish request was immediately acceded to, and positive orders were sent to India to restrain vessels bound for Suez. These instructions did not arrive in time to prevent various sailings during 1776, but these were in no way molested, in spite of the fact that the Porte had repeatedly enjoined the Pasha of Cairo from permitting more cargoes and passengers from landing.⁴³

Baldwin meanwhile had done all in his power to promote both the trade and the communications. He had addressed notes on the manifold advantages of Egypt to the Indian Government,⁴⁴ and he had begun to contemplate the improvement in his own position which would result from his being appointed British Consul in Egypt. But his protests and arguments against Turkish attitude and the East India Company's commercial policy were of little avail as compared with a series of incidents occurring in the Red Sea area at the height of the trade. Contrary to the impression Baldwin had been careful to give in all of his communications, political conditions in Egypt were never long stable. The year 1776 produced new proofs of this. During the course of the year, Mohammed Abou Dahab died while on a campaign in Syria. In the ensuing struggle among the Beys for supremacy, the power of government was seized by three rival chiefs. In effect, the security which had marked the two previous régimes vanished and confusion everywhere prevailed.⁴⁵

Upon the arrival of a new British Ambassador, Sir Robert Ainslie, at the Porte, he was immediately confronted with serious issues. He was particularly tried by the arrival at Suez almost simultaneously of five English merchant vessels, four from Bengal and one from Bombay. Being reproached by these arrivals, Ainslie tried dissimulation and feigned to believe that these could not be English vessels, but that they were perhaps interlopers — doubtless Turkish subjects. His evasions were without effect. He was presently confronted with definite evidence

⁴³ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 52, Hayes to the Foreign Office, 3 Jan., and 3 June, 1776. The Porte was never long unaware of English activities in Egypt, as the French were diligent in reporting every detail.

⁴⁴ "View of the advantages and the possibility of pursuing, by the navigation of the Red Sea to Suez, a commerce between India and Egypt" (22 March, 1776). — Brit. Mus., Add. Mss., 29210, Fos. 422-424. Cited by Charles-Roux, p. 56.

⁴⁵ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

concerning the ownership of the vessels, and at the same time was given a new and categorical note to be transmitted to his Government, demanding the cessation of all Christian navigation of the Red Sea above Jeddah. The note repeated that the Red Sea adjacent to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina was held sacred and might not be profaned by commercial activities, that the trade was contrary to usage, and, in a word, that all this was likely to endanger the good relations which had long existed between the English and Ottoman Governments.⁴⁶

The situation was complicated by the fact that the Beys of Egypt, making the most of what might prove to be a short period of power, levied duties of 20% on the goods landed, and the Turkish Government took peculiar delight in placing an additional heavy duty on such of the goods as were forwarded from Egypt.⁴⁷ At this, Baldwin and the injured merchants loudly affirmed the right of trade under the treaty arrangement of 1775, and demanded compensation from the Porte for the recent outrages. In such a dilemma, Ainslie took a sympathetic attitude toward the Turks on the principle involved, partly because of personal dislike to Baldwin, whom he suspected of advancing his own interests at the expense of the Crown and the East India Company, and partly because of his belief that he understood the sentiment both of the Home Government and the two trading companies concerned. His reports to the Foreign Office were so alarming that the East India Company was easily prevailed upon to supplement the orders already sent out to India by more drastic ones still. On July 4, 1777, the Court of Directors issued a positive prohibition to any British or Company's vessel to trade to any Red Sea ports except Jeddah and Mocha. Copies of this order were at once sent to the Governor-General in Bengal and to Baldwin at Cairo, with instructions to publish them immediately.⁴⁸

Only on July 11 did Ainslie receive the instructions from home he had awaited for several months. These informed him of the steps which had been taken to terminate the Red Sea navigation, but requested him to arrange, if possible, for the safety of such vessels as might arrive at Suez before the publication of the notices in the Indian Presidencies. A further and much more significant request was also included. Ainslie was authorized to ask that the East India Company be permitted to send despatches by way of Suez on condition that the packet boats carry no merchandise.

⁴⁶ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, East India Correspondence.

⁴⁷ Ainslie was very fearful lest the Turks retaliate by limiting the trading privileges of the Levant Company.

⁴⁸ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Correspondence of the East India House.

Before the Turkish Government returned a formal reply to these requests, a partial answer had been given by the outcome of what served as a test case. In January, 1777, a sloop-of-war, the *Swallow*, Capt. Panton, arrived at Suez, having been sent on special mission by the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, with despatches of unusual gravity. At the request of Baldwin, the *de facto* Pasha of Cairo, Ibrahim Bey, consented to permit the landing of three special messengers with their effects. Upon their arrival at Cairo, the Pasha, wishing to curry favor with the Porte, violated the safe conduct he had given and had the baggage of the messengers searched. After much difficulty the three men managed to secure their release and to proceed to Alexandria, where they were a second time arrested and their baggage was rifled. Finally the three were allowed to depart for Europe, but without some of their more important despatches.⁴⁹

Baldwin complained bitterly to Ainslie concerning this incident and begged him to secure from the Porte a *commandement* which would prevent the repetition of such an outrage. And at the same time he sought to convince the Ambassador, and through him the Porte, that the Suez route was essential to Turkish welfare, if not to that of the East India Company.⁵⁰ Although Ainslie was much less favorably disposed toward the Suez route of trade and communications than his predecessor Murray, he felt it his duty to maintain English prestige, even in Egypt. He therefore made representations to the Ottoman Government as to the treatment accorded the three official messengers brought out on the *Swallow*, and craved the indulgence of the Porte for such vessels as might arrive at Suez before the notice of the termination of Red Sea navigation had been published in India, but he was unable to secure any satisfaction in return. In replying to Baldwin, therefore, he could only reiterate the prohibition of the Ottoman Government of the navigation of the Red Sea above Jeddah.⁵¹

Late in the summer of 1777, Baldwin received a packet of despatches from the Directors of the East India Company with instructions to have them carried to India by the sloop *Swallow*. This vessel, however, having remained in the Suez roadstead for a considerable time, had already sailed on her return voyage. As the London despatches were described as being of the greatest importance, Baldwin, anxious to prove the utility of the Suez route, considered himself justified in hiring a native vessel to carry them

⁴⁹ Eyles Irwin, *A Series of Adventures in the Course of a Voyage up the Red Sea* (Dublin, 1780), pp. 554 ff.

⁵⁰ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 53, Baldwin to Sir R. Ainslie, 22 Jan., 1777.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

to India before the commencement of the southwest monsoon.⁵² It is true that his zeal for the Red Sea route may have been stimulated on this occasion by commissions he had received from England to forward private messages. But when it came to the ears of the Directors that a despatch vessel had been chartered at their expense, and had carried private mails as well, their indignation knew no bounds. Baldwin was accused of having violated the confidence of his employers. They would not pay the "extravagant sum" of £4,500 for the chartered vessel, and insisted that all expenses of the voyage must be paid by those who had sent the private despatches. For some time it appeared probable that Baldwin's position as agent would be vacated. It was at last confirmed, but with plenty of admonition as to his future conduct.⁵³ This incident, coming at a time when the Red Sea passage was acquiring a certain notoriety, conspired to discredit it further in the eyes of the British Cabinet.

The Turkish Government had more reason for attempting to stop the use of the Red Sea by "Frank" vessels than religious prejudice or the wish to deprive the rebellious Beys of Egypt of a source of income. It was feared that the commercial opening of the Red Sea might wean away from the old trade route, which utilized the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia, such commerce as still reached Levantine ports. It was chiefly by this route that Constantinople itself was supplied with eastern goods. But more than that, Turkish suspicions of English motives in developing a route through Egypt caused no little anxiety. The sight of English and Indian official messengers hastening through Egypt with secret despatches, the frequent arrival at Suez of vessels of war, the indiscreet remarks of George Baldwin, the curiosity of English explorers in Egypt (who knew that they were not spies?), all conspired to breed a feeling of alarm.⁵⁴ This was augmented not a little by the similar suspicions of the French, who easily persuaded themselves that British designs included the actual conquest of Egypt at the first favorable moment.⁵⁵ The fact that these sus-

⁵² I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5; Letter from the East India House to George Baldwin, 1 Apr., 1777. Baldwin had been instructed to send the despatches back to Malta if the *Swallow* had sailed.

⁵³ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Correspondence of the East India House.

⁵⁴ From the time of Bruce, Englishmen whose purposes were not evident frequently crossed Egypt. Many of them, instead of crossing the desert from Cairo to Suez, chose to follow the Nile into Upper Egypt and to take ship from Cosseir or Tor. In this way they avoided a very unpleasant desert trip and at the same time, if they were not in haste, they gained a view of the monuments of ancient Egypt. Both the Turks and the Egyptians completely failed to understand these tourists and suspected them of having overt intentions.

⁵⁵ Arch. Aff. Étrang., De Trouy (French Vice-Consul at Cairo) to his Govern-

pitions were without foundation did not lessen the attempts made to exclude the English from Egypt altogether.⁶⁶

French and English objectives in the eastern Mediterranean were far from being the same, although each suspected the other of having identical designs. The official correspondence of the time does not indicate that either the British Government, the Levant Company, or the East India Company had the slightest thought of undertaking the conquest of Egypt, however simple an undertaking that might prove to be. At the same time, both Ainslie and Baldwin believed that they had good evidence of French plans for securing for themselves the right of navigating the Red Sea and unloading cargoes in Egypt, which was in fact equally unfounded. What these diplomatic agents failed to uncover were the real designs of France, which looked toward the French conquest of Egypt as a means of competing with Britain on more nearly equal terms in India and elsewhere in the East. Thus, Ainslie reported to his home government in September, 1777, that a certain Baron de Tott, Inspector General of the French commercial ports in the Levant, was visiting Cairo in the hope of signing a commercial treaty with the Beys.⁶⁷ De Tott's mission, however, was much more sinister: it was nothing less than to study and report on the means of effecting a French conquest of Egypt, of opening a French route to India through Egypt, and even of reopening the ancient canal between the Nile and the Red Sea for that purpose.⁶⁸ It was only incidental that the French did infrequently make use of the Suez route for much the same purpose as the English East India Company, in transmitting important despatches or in sending out reinforcements of officers to India.⁶⁹

In pursuance of instructions from England and at the insistence of Baldwin, Ainslie presented to the Porte in August, 1777, a note asking that English vessels coming to Suez in ignorance of instructions forbidding the traffic be permitted to land their cargoes, and that the use of the Suez route for the transmission of despatches be authorized. No reply was received to this communication. Conferences with Turkish Ministers also were without avail. Finally, in November, he received a very unsatisfactory

ment, 8 June, 1777; and Mure (French Consul General at Alexandria), 17 June, 1777; cited by Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89.

⁶⁶ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Correspondence of the East India House.

⁶⁷ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 53, Ainslie, 17 Sept., 1777.

⁶⁸ Baron de Tott, *Mémoires sur les Turcs et les Tartares* (Paris, 1784), IV, 72; cited by Charles-Roux, p. 94.

⁶⁹ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

reply. On the question of English vessels coming to Suez on any errand whatsoever, the Turks were adamant: Jeddah was to be the limit of navigation. Messages might be forwarded in native boats from Jeddah to Cairo, whence English agents could take charge of them. It was only later still, after Ainslie had spoken of the possibility of English vessels bombarding Suez, that he was able to secure an extension of the Egyptian trade to the end of the summer of 1778.⁶⁰

The English trade with Egypt meanwhile showed no signs of diminution. In the spring of 1778 thirteen vessels arrived at Suez flying the British flag. Being angrily confronted with this by the Reis Effendi, Ainslie felt it wise to disavow a part of the report: he insisted therefore that only eight vessels had arrived flying the English flag, and that these were operated by an international group of irresponsible adventurers.⁶¹

This scarcely lessened the wrath of the Turks, and as hostilities were on the point of breaking out between England and France, Ainslie was hard put to it to save the right of the transmission of British despatches through Egypt in such an emergency. He promised that such an event would never occur again, but relations with the Porte remained bad, and no support was offered by Lord Weymouth at the Foreign Office.⁶²

In the meantime, the Suez or "overland" route had been put to very practical use. In April, 1778, Ainslie apprised Baldwin of the alliance of France with the revolted American colonies, and asked that the news be sent to India as quickly as possible. Baldwin welcomed the opportunity to prove one of his contentions, and sent word to all of the presidencies with such effect that the capture of Pondicherry was effected at an early date and French activities in India paralyzed. One of these despatches had consumed but 68 days from London to Madras.⁶³ The Turkish Government, however, showed as much aversion from the arrival at Suez of naval vessels in the capacity of packets as from English mercantile sailings. Ainslie was thus reduced to the necessity of feigning to believe that the reports of English sailings were all wrong: he would investigate. But a new difficulty was

⁶⁰ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, No. 221, "Translation of the Ottoman Porte's Answer to His Excellency's Memorial, dated the 26th August, 1777"; S. P., Turkey, vol. 53, Ainslie, 18 Nov., 3 and 17 Dec., 1777.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 54, Report by Ainslie, 3 Aug., 1778.

⁶² I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, No. 243.

⁶³ Baldwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 22. "I had the satisfaction," Baldwin states, "to convey the first advices of the war in 1778 to the East Indies, by means of which they were enabled, to the astonishment of all England, when the news arrived, to expel the French from India before succours could reach them, and add their possessions to our own."

suddenly added to the others: George Baldwin arrived at Constantinople.

For a considerable time Baldwin had been obsessed with the idea that since he was performing all the functions of a consul, that title should be conferred upon him. The consular office once maintained in Egypt by the English Government had terminated when the English trade had deserted that country for other regions. Since that time, under the authorization of the British Embassy at Constantinople, English mercantile interests in Egypt were in the hands of the chief custom house officer at Cairo, a native. Since it was the function of the Levant Company to set up consular establishments in the region covered by its monopoly, Baldwin had applied to it first in 1776 for the reestablishment of the office at Cairo. The Company refused to take such action in view of the political situation in that country.⁶⁴ Baldwin thereupon approached Ainslie, asking that the functions exercised by the customs officer be conferred upon him. This Ainslie professed not to have within his power. Baldwin still did not despair. At the end of 1777, he reopened the issue, maintaining that he could not discharge his functions as English agent under the circumstances. On this occasion, as before, he made little headway. The Levant Company was little interested in Egypt, and Ainslie would not act without instructions from the Levant Company. Baldwin was, however, granted the right of *acting* as consul without possessing the title.⁶⁵ It was to secure documentary confirmation of his title and the right of English vessels to trade with Egypt through the Red Sea that he went to Constantinople at the end of 1778.

Baldwin's visit bore little fruit. His attempts to bribe Ainslie into acquiescence with his plans added to the suspicion with which he was already regarded by the incorruptible Ambassador. He was able to secure some documentary confirmation of the power and position he claimed in Egypt — a *commandement* making him protector of all English interests in Egypt, a letter naming him *vakeel*, or lieutenant, of the Ambassador with all the rights and emoluments of consul, and another letter practically deposing the chief customer at Cairo from his pretended position.⁶⁶ Baldwin made much less headway in attempting to convert Ainslie to the right and need of the Red Sea traffic. The Ambassador, whose understanding of the situation existing in various parts of the

⁶⁴ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Correspondence of the East India House.

⁶⁵ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-111.

⁶⁶ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 54, Ainslie, 17 Dec., 1778; Vol. 55, 4 and 24 Jan., 25 and 26 Feb., 1779.

Ottoman Empire was by no means profound, refused to alter his attitude of agreement with Turkish prohibitions of the Suez trade, and Baldwin was warned that such injunctions must be enforced.

The Porte again took occasion, before Baldwin's departure for Egypt, to issue to Ainslie another interdict in the form of a *hattichérif* bearing on the navigation of the Red Sea by Christian vessels.⁶⁷ In return, Ainslie presented an additional memoir to the Porte, asking for the admission to the waters of Suez of any Government or East India Company's vessel bearing despatches but no merchantable wares. This was returned to him with the statement that the prohibition which had frequently been issued was final and was not a subject to be argued; the transit of despatches through Egypt was inadmissible except under the conditions already proposed. Ainslie felt obliged to indicate his acceptance of this fiat, first because he was orally given to understand that the transit of despatches in the usual manner would be tolerated until the end of the following summer, and in the second place, he was doubtful of receiving support from Baldwin on the basis of such concessions as he might obtain by further insistence. With renewed instructions as to the necessity of observing these arrangements, and with power to appoint agents in Egypt to assist in enforcing the regulations, Baldwin returned to Egypt, outwardly obedient, but secretly unrepentant. He still believed in the Suez trade.

Even during the return voyage to Egypt from Constantinople, Baldwin evolved a scheme for carrying out his favorite idea. It occurred to him that some Indian merchandise might safely be unloaded at Suez along with Indian despatches, in case the agent at Cairo, that is, himself, assumed responsibility for the payment of a Turkish duty on such goods, and strictly prevented the embarkation at Suez of any goods bound for India. This, he believed, would be to the advantage of every one. He was inclined to attach little weight to Ainslie's instructions to carry out the recent injunctions carefully in order to give the Turks no ground for making concessions to the French.⁶⁸

The Ottoman authorities, however, soon put themselves at fault. In August, 1779, two English packets arrived at Suez, and two official messengers, Captain Scott and Lieutenant Mills, with their despatches, were landed. These were suffered to pass through Egypt to Alexandria, but there they were arrested and held. Baldwin instantly sent to Constantinople to obtain redress,

⁶⁷ Translations of this document are to be found in De Testa, *op. cit.*, J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, and Baldwin, *Political Recollections*.

⁶⁸ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 55, Letter from the Foreign Office, 10 March, 1779.

which in time was forthcoming, although he was severely censured for having permitted articles of trade to be landed under cover of the transit of despatches. On his part, Ainslie proposed to the Turkish Government that only armed vessels of the East India Company be permitted to bring despatches to Suez, and that these be empowered to seize vessels trading in those parts. The Turkish reply was a repetition of former refusals to tolerate either trade or communication in Christian vessels. At that point the matter rested, Ainslie consoling himself with the belief that if English vessels might no longer reach Suez safely, at any rate French plans for developing a route through Egypt had been forestalled.⁶⁹

As a kind of substitute for the Red Sea route, Ainslie suggested to the Foreign Office the use of another short cut to India for the sending of despatches — one which was destined to be highly celebrated in the next century as the "alternative route." To prove the merits of this line, he was able to secure Turkish consent for the despatch of two English officers and some official papers from Aleppo through Mesopotamia to Basrah and thence to Bombay. This route, he suggested, might be found preferable in many respects to that through Egypt.⁷⁰ It did not develop, however. In subsequent years it was employed on occasions, notably during the French occupation of Egypt from 1798 to 1801. But the natural difficulties of this route, coupled with the dangers from nomadic Arabs, who had little regard for a Turkish safe conduct, prevented it from being much employed or even considered as a regular route of communication during these years.

By the opening of the year 1779, it was becoming apparent that the Suez route would soon, to all intents and purposes, be closed. To the failure to secure compensation for the injuries inflicted upon the passengers of the *Swallow* in 1777 and the repeated injunctions of the Porte in 1778 was added the arbitrary arrest of two English officers on mission in 1779.⁷¹ This was sufficient evidence that the Porte was in earnest in terminating the Suez traffic and that, even in the confused state of Egypt, it could still exact a measure of obedience. The risks, both of trade and of communication, were mounting rapidly.

⁶⁹ Charles-Roux (pp. 127-128) points out that the idea of French plans for a route of communications was an illusion. French vessels did come to Suez on occasion at this period, but whether primarily to engage in trade or to maintain a partial communication between France and French ports in India is not altogether clear.

⁷⁰ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, No. 256, Ainslie to Viscount Weymouth, 17 Sept., 1779; J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 104 ff.

⁷¹ S. P., Turkey, Vol., 55, Baldwin, 30 April, 1779; *Firman de la Sublime Porte*, in J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, Annexe No. 5, 419-420.

The climax of the contest was reached in a series of unhappy events which occurred during 1779. In April, two English vessels arrived at Suez bearing despatches and merchandise. The despatches passed without difficulty, and the captains of the trading vessels, warned by Baldwin of the prohibition against trade, were not molested in disposing of their goods discreetly and "privately."⁷² In this Baldwin gave material assistance. On May 24 two vessels showing the Danish flag, but under the direction of an Englishman, George Moore, arrived at Suez. Moore, who brought a letter of recommendation from the Governor-General of Bengal, addressed himself to the Bey of Cairo. His supercargo, a German named Van der Velden, also bearing a letter from the Governor-General, approached Baldwin for assistance. Baldwin took no active part at first. Having received from the Bey permission to discharge their merchandise, the ships were unloaded, and Moore, taking the portion which belonged to him, went first to Cairo, where he had no difficulty in disposing of his goods at considerable profit.

The other traders, the German, two Frenchmen, Saint-Germain and his brother, four Englishmen, O'Donnell, Jenkins, Barrington and Waugh, formed a caravan for conveying their goods to Cairo a few weeks later. They anticipated no danger, for not only did they have a safe conduct, but even the camels had been supplied by the Bey. In consequence, they travelled unprepared and unarmed. At a little distance from Suez they were suddenly set upon by a party of Bedouins, who made short work of pillaging the entire caravan, which was valued at £37,500, taking even the clothing of the merchants and leaving them stranded in the desert. O'Donnell returned to Suez. The others, believing they could reach Cairo, proceeded. They soon lost their way, however, and through hunger, thirst, fatigue and sun stroke, all except one of the party died. He, Saint-Germain, after unbelievable tortures, was succored by a *fellah*, and presently rescued by a French merchant of Cairo.

O'Donnell meanwhile had reached Cairo from Suez, and with the assistance of Baldwin, who, it later appeared, had invested heavily in this particular enterprise, obtained from the Bey an offer of assistance in recovering the stolen goods. By a clever stroke, the Bey, who supplied an expeditionary force of 200 soldiers, seized the two ships in the Suez roadstead and sequestered them. With all the merchandise in his possession, he threw off his mask, imprisoned Moore, and held Baldwin and O'Donnell as prisoners on parole. At this moment five Englishmen bearing

⁷² S. P., Turkey, Vol. 55, Baldwin to Ainslie, 30 July, 1779.

despatches arrived at Alexandria from England *en route* to India — those who had come out on the vessels which had reached Suez in April. These men were temporarily held, but were presently released on the promise that they would take no action.

The Bey promptly reported the affair to the Porte, as did Baldwin and O'Donnell to Sir Robert Ainslie.⁷³ The episode made quite a stir, not only at Constantinople, but at the courts of western Europe. Various attitudes were taken. The prevalent opinion was that in violating a well-known prohibition, the merchants would be unable to recover their losses. The Porte did not conceal its joy at the action of the Bey, and confirmed him in his position forthwith.⁷⁴ Ainslie, although wholly out of sympathy with the enterprise, still appealed to the Porte to secure the release of those held by the Bey, and this was accorded. Before instructions to this effect reached Egypt, the Bey, anticipating the attitude which would be taken by the Porte and the various European powers, had released all except Baldwin and another Englishman, Skiddy, one of the agents of the commercial expedition, who were held as security against any reprisals which might be taken.⁷⁵

Before action could be taken for the release of Baldwin and his companion, the former "jumped" his parole, and escaped from Alexandria on a French vessel, deserting all of his property in Egypt and leaving Skiddy to follow suit as he might.⁷⁶ Landing first at Smyrna, Baldwin made his way to Constantinople, where he spent the next several months in assessing blame for all those whom he considered in any way connected with the late tragedy. He first vented his wrath on the prominent Venetian merchant in Egypt, Carlo Rosetti, whom he thought responsible for the whole plan of plundering the caravan, in collusion, perhaps, with the chief customs officer, Antoun Cassis, whose functions as official agent for England Baldwin had recently been able to terminate.⁷⁷

At Constantinople Baldwin devoted his time chiefly to attempts to justify his conduct in Egypt and to bringing charges against Ainslie, whom he considered an unpatriotic Turcophile. Although Baldwin was able to rally to his cause some influential persons both in Turkey and in England, he was unable to make

⁷³ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, No. 253, Letter from John O'Donnell to Sir Robert Ainslie, Cairo, 5 Aug., 1779.

⁷⁴ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 55, Ainslie, 18 Oct., 1779.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Baldwin, 31 Aug., 1779.

⁷⁶ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Nos. 253 *et seq.*

⁷⁷ S. P., Turkey, Vol. 55, Baldwin, 7 Dec., 1779. F. Charles-Roux considers the case against Rosetti largely or entirely unfounded.

serious headway in accomplishing his dearest wish, which was to secure Ainslie's recall. In the spring of 1780, almost a year after the attack on the caravan near Suez, Baldwin decided to carry his case to England in person, where he hoped still to enlist influence in favor of opening the Suez route and to clear himself of all charges of disobedience.⁷⁸ Within the following twelve-month the British Foreign Office was able to survey all of the evidence bearing on the events of 1779, and Ainslie was found guiltless of any lapse of duty.

The incidents of 1779 could not take effect instantly. Before the news had reached England and India by the slow means of transit then in use, still other vessels came to Egypt.⁷⁹ The passengers on some of these, by employing the good offices of Carlo Rosetti escaped trouble. But in the summer of 1780, two English vessels, a packet and a frigate, arrived at Cosseir, one of the doors to Egypt. Five Englishmen were landed. By satisfying the greed of a local chief with a payment of about £35, they were permitted to proceed to Cairo. There four of them were temporarily imprisoned, then released on the promise to return to their vessels. The fifth, named Wooley, was suffered to take ship for Constantinople with his despatches, perhaps as a means of shifting part of the responsibility to the Turkish authorities. At Constantinople he was detained and some of his despatches were opened, in which it appeared that the English authorities in India still hoped to carry on trade relations with the Beys of Egypt under the treaty of 1775. It was with considerable difficulty that Ainslie succeeded in liberating his countryman and in sending him on to England.⁸⁰

Ainslie was much perturbed over this incident, but hard on its heels followed more trouble in Egypt to complete the breach opened by the plunder of the caravan in the preceding year. While waiting at Cosseir, the sailors of the English frigate above

⁷⁸ While participation in the trade from India was not open to Baldwin after his appointment as consul *de facto* in Egypt, first because of the Turkish prohibition on Christian trade and second because of the nature of his duties, Baldwin's situation deserves a bit of sympathy. In 1777, as related, he was held responsible by the East India Company for the payment of £4500 which he was unable to raise. At the end of 1778 the same Company's Directors voted him a "bonus" of £500 "for faithful services" during that year, but at the same time they neglected to pay him his regular stipend. Baldwin may have been grasping, but there is every reason to believe that he was largely dependent on his own commercial enterprise for support. I cannot consider him quite the rogue that he appears to M. François Charles-Roux.

⁷⁹ Late in 1779 Ainslie had been given orally to understand that, for purposes of communication only, Englishmen proceeding through Egypt would not be molested during the year 1780. — I. O., Factory Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Nos. 263-265, Letters from Ainslie.

⁸⁰ F. O., Turkey, Vol. 1, Ainslie, 17 and 21 Aug., 1780.

mentioned during shore leave were drawn into an open clash with the Bedouins and five of the former were killed. The captain of the vessel, throwing caution to the wind, determined on a reprisal and began a bombardment of the town which lasted until numerous casualties had atoned for injuries received earlier.

Ainslie made a strong representation to the Foreign Office on this head, begging that the repeated violations of the Turkish prohibition of the navigation to Egypt be ended.⁸¹ Again orders were sent to the Governors of the Indian Presidencies reaffirming previous instructions. This, however, was unnecessary. The news of the attack on the caravan in 1779 and of the further trouble in 1780, added to the many evidences of the uncompromising attitude of the Ottoman authorities, spread much more rapidly in India than did all of the injunctions of the Porte as advertised by the East India Company. Since the trade to Egypt had become more dangerous than profitable, and since communications through Egypt had to rely on native boats and messengers between Jeddah and Suez, that route was largely given up. Even the action of the Beys in deposing the reigning Pasha Ismaïl, that they might again profit by the illegitimate trade with India, had no immediate effect. By the end of 1780 it was said that "English vessels no longer come to Suez."⁸²

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 20 March and 16 Sept., 1780. In spite of his vigorous protests at the violation of the Turkish injunctions by Englishmen, Ainslie commissioned one Richard Hughes to occupy a post in Cairo as agent of the East India Company with practically the powers enjoyed by Baldwin. If there was to be no trade with Egypt and no communication through that country, this office was superfluous.

⁸² I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, No. 273.

CHAPTER II

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE OVERLAND ROUTE

FOLLOWING the withdrawal of the English from active participation in the Indo-Egyptian trade and the contemporaneous exit of George Baldwin as English agent in Egypt, such English travellers and messengers as still had courage to use the overland route found a friend and advocate in Carlo Rosetti, Baldwin's *bête noire*. Rosetti, a "true political chameleon," appears at one time or another to have served all those Christian nations which had interests in Egypt, as well as various Mohammedan régimes.¹ This circumstance still enabled Englishmen to pass to or from India through Egypt, and so it tended to keep alive, through the publication of accounts by these travellers, some conception of the advantages to be gained by the development of a route through Egypt for communications, if not for trade.²

In the meantime, others were appearing on the scene. Austria had long taken a healthy interest in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. At this time, the Imperial Internuncio at Constantinople, who had made a fortune by privately engaging in the Indo-Egyptian trade, persuaded his government to establish an official post in Egypt. Through Austrian influence at the Porte, the chief of the customs at Alexandria, Antoun Cassis, was formally recognized as agent and representative of Austria and was loaded with honors and titles. The Venetian free lance, Rosetti, was drawn into the scheme as an Austrian agent. Likewise, the chief of customs at Cairo was placed under the protection of the Holy Roman Empire for the same purpose. These men were but the first of a considerable number of representatives it was planned to establish in Egypt for the development of trade.³

¹ F. Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez, et l'Égypte au XVIII^e Siècle*, pp. 153-154.

² See the accounts by Capper (1785), Savary (1786), Volney (1787), and Rooke (1788).

³ F. O., Turkey, Vol. 3, 3 and 9 Aug., 1782. These Foreign Office papers, as in the previous chapter, are cited in Charles-Roux.

These arrangements were carried out with the knowledge and consent of the Porte. Ainslie was considerably upset and alarmed, not only at the apparent inconsistency of Turkish attitude, but also at the probable effect on the English East India trade. His complaints on the subject had little effect, however, now that the English Government had ceased to interest itself in the navigation of the Red Sea. Ainslie's anxiety on account of Austrian schemes did not last long. Early in 1784 Antoun Cassis suddenly and mysteriously quitted Alexandria, ostensibly to go on a pilgrimage, and with his departure, Austrian preparations dwindled away.⁴

Although many Englishmen had already come to regret their withdrawal from Egypt in consequence of the events of 1779, it was not they who returned now that the field had been vacated by the Austrians. Since 1763 the French had been casting longing eyes at Egypt, less with the idea of developing trade and communications with the consent of the Porte or in collusion with the Beys, than with a view to the military occupation of the country and its use as a base of operations against the English in India.⁵ No move of the English in Egypt long remained unnoticed by the French Embassy at Constantinople or at the Foreign Office at Versailles. French agents in an almost constant stream passed to and fro through Egypt surveying its strength and resources and estimating its value as a French colony.⁶ After 1778, when the French formed an alliance with the American colonies against Great Britain, their attempts to undermine British influence all through the East were redoubled.⁷ Some proposals were made for an alliance between France and Persia for the purpose of approaching India. Others looked toward a European coalition for seizing Egypt and Arabia and for cutting a canal through the Isthmus of Suez in order to take the English in the flank, a project actually attempted some twenty years later. The economic possibilities of Egypt were not overlooked.⁸ The French Consul-General at Alexandria, Mure, considered it "beyond doubt that the commerce of India can be made to pass by way of Egypt as formerly, with a marked advantage over those

⁴ F. O., Turkey, Vol. 5, Ainslie, 10 Feb., 1784; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

⁵ F. Charles-Roux, "La politique française en Égypte à la fin du dix-huitième siècle," in *La Revue Historique*, LXII (1906), and *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte*, pp. 31-34.

⁶ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez, et l'Égypte*, pp. 161-162.

⁷ See above, p. 18.

⁸ Masson, *Histoire du Commerce français dans le Levant*, p. 574, *passim*; Charles-Roux, *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte*, pp. 103-123.

nations who continue to employ the way by the Cape of Good Hope.”⁹

The signing of the peace at Versailles, September 3, 1783, although scarcely altering the feeling of hostility between the two powers, tended to exert some influence on French projects in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁰ The French Ministry gave up plans for occupying Egypt in force in favor of developing a communication with India by way of Suez, employing much the same means as the English had used in the early seventies — agreement with the Beys of Cairo. In 1783 and 1784 various French officers were commissioned to study the possibilities of executing this plan, and the French Ambassador at the Porte was even instructed to prepare a table comparing the advantages of the two natural routes to India, that by way of Basrah and that by way of Egypt and the Red Sea.¹¹ Nothing tangible was accomplished, however, until the arrival in Egypt late in 1784 of a French marine officer, the Chevalier de Truguet.

His arrival at Alexandria marked the opening of a new phase of French diplomacy — one in which the principal endeavor was transferred from Constantinople, where it had been only partially successful, to Egypt, where the coast appeared to be clear for a monopoly of influence. Truguet was destined to succeed where some of his countrymen had failed because of several favorable circumstances. In the first place, he was the bearer of a note of friendship to the Beys of Egypt from a high functionary of Turkey, the Capitan Pasha, Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet.¹² In the second place, he had an invaluable ally in the French merchant, Charles Magallon, who had long been established in Egypt. Being on the point of retiring from active work, Magallon was requested by the French Ambassador at Constantinople to remain in Egypt in the capacity of consul for this particular mission. However, all the twenty-two years of Magallon's experience in Egypt might have availed little in negotiating a treaty with the Beys but for the fact that Mme. Magallon had once been of service to these chiefs in Upper Egypt and she had remained on intimate terms with the inmates of the harems of the chiefs at Cairo.¹³

Materially assisted by the merchant and his wife, Truguet was

⁹ Charles-Roux, *Les Origines*, etc., p. 129, Archives Ministères de la Guerre, 1783. This memoir of Mure was one of those consulted by Bonaparte before his expedition to Egypt in 1798.

¹⁰ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 166.

¹¹ Masson, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

¹² Charles-Roux, *Les Origines*, etc., pp. 148 ff.

¹³ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 171.

not long in negotiating a phenomenal treaty in which the French were accorded exclusive and exceedingly extensive privileges in Egypt and the Red Sea. Little was taken for granted in this document, which was signed at Cairo on February 7, 1785, by Murat (or Murad) Bey for the chiefs of Egypt and the Chevalier de Truguet for France.¹⁴ It guaranteed freedom of all kinds to French merchants, gave them exemption from all dues and taxes except the usual customs, which were greatly reduced, and stipulated the right of transmitting sealed messages through Egypt. One clause, especially, threatened the English East India Company: the permission to ship goods in bond from India to France through Egypt.¹⁵ In order to give the document more of the appearance of regularity, it was provided that the treaty should continue in force pending the arrival of the *hattichérif*, or sign manual, from the Porte to legalize it. This, of course, was hardly to be anticipated as long as the English maintained a large measure of influence at Constantinople. But inasmuch as the treaty was concluded "with the utmost secrecy," it is evident that the absence of the sign manual was to be considered no obstacle as long as the Egyptian authorities wished the treaty to remain in force. Two subsidiary treaties were also signed at the same time, one between Truguet and the Chief of Customs at Cairo, Youssouf Cassab, pertaining to the duties to be levied on French goods arriving at Suez, and the other between Truguet and an Arab sheik arranging for a fixed charge for caravan camels.¹⁶ The French appeared to have obtained more than the English had formerly sought.

There was no Englishman in Egypt at this time either to obstruct the consummation of the treaty or to discover its secret provisions. Nevertheless, there were exceedingly efficient informers in Egypt in English employ, and the treaty had not long been completed before a copy of it was surreptitiously obtained and despatched with all haste to Ainslie at Constantinople. Sir Robert had already become deeply suspicious of French designs because of their unusual activity throughout the Levant during

¹⁴ India Office, Factory Records, Egypt and Red Sea, Vol. 5, "Convention between the Court of France and the Government of Egypt, concluded with the latter on the Port of France by the Chevalier de Truguet" (also spelled Truquet, Fruquet, and Chetruquet). The first text obtained of this treaty was in Italian, prepared, apparently, by Ainslie's private correspondent in Egypt, M. Brandi. See Baldwin, *Political Recollections*, pp. 23-24; J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez*, I, 110-111. The text of the document is given in the latter, pp. 421-422.

¹⁵ There is little evidence that the French had carried any Asiatic goods across Egypt to Europe before this time.

¹⁶ Baron de Testa, *Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottomane*, II, 80-83; J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, Annexe No. 7, p. 423.

the preceding months.¹⁷ Confiding his suspicions to the Foreign Office, he was cautioned, in 1784, to secure for England such special privileges as might be granted to any other European power. French interest in the Black Sea and in the islands of the Archipelago threw him off the correct scent, however, and he failed to anticipate any French attempt to effect a *liaison* with the Beys.¹⁸ It was only in the opening days of March, 1785, that he received an inkling of the real situation, upon receiving word from his private correspondent in Alexandria that the Porte had given the French the right to trade with the port of Suez. Charged with this act of discrimination, members of the Turkish Ministry denied all knowledge of any such arrangement. Such disquieting news put Ainslie on his guard, however, and contributed largely to the undoing of the French plans in the end.¹⁹

The reports of these activities caused considerable uneasiness in London, both to Government and to East India Company, and pointed out the need for an English consul in Egypt. The Foreign Minister, the Marquis of Carmarthen, gave Ainslie special caution.

Whatever part France may be inclined to take in the affairs of Turkey, it becomes an object of great importance to us to prevent, if possible, the attainment of her views in Egypt. The consequences they must invariably produce . . . upon our East India trade and establishments are too obvious to require the smallest explanations. You, Sir, have heard of her wish to induce the Porte to allow France the two ports of Suez and Gedda on the Red Sea; these two objects are of themselves sufficient to create alarm on our part, and I trust that the Ottoman Government may be induced to abstain from such a demand, when the pernicious effects to England are represented by you in their real and just points of view. . . .²⁰

Ainslie, however, while piqued and seriously concerned about the rumored French plans, was still inclined to underestimate the danger. He was repeatedly and categorically assured by the

¹⁷ F. O., Turkey, vol. 5, Ainslie, 24 Jan. and 20 Feb., 1784.

¹⁸ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 174-175.

¹⁹ Ainslie evolved various theories to explain the mysterious schemes of the French. At this time he concluded that the most plausible solution would be an attempt of the French to open commerce to Suez under an Indian flag — doubtless that of Tipoo, who had sent an embassy to Constantinople in 1784.

²⁰ I. O., Factory Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Extract of a Letter from the Marquis of Carmarthen to Sir Robert Ainslie, 19 May, 1785. See Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 180.

Turkish Ministers that their attitude toward the opening of the Red Sea to Christian commerce had not altered in the least since 1777, and that they had no knowledge of any plans to establish new lines of trade with Suez. These assurances quieted Ainslie's worst fears, for he did not discover at any time that at the very moment he was being thus advised the French Ambassador at the Porte, Choiseul-Gouffier, was requesting Turkish sanction of the treaties negotiated by Truguet.²¹ Even the reported arrival of a French corvette, the *Auguste*, from Pondicherry at Suez on April 24 bearing special messengers *en route* to Versailles,²² and the contemporaneous appearance of two French frigates at Basrah loaded with arms and ammunition,²³ created no great alarm.

Late in the summer Ainslie received from his Alexandria correspondent, Brandi, copies of the documents negotiated with the Beys by Truguet several weeks before. Although with these the secret of the French was out, there seemed to be no new cause for anxiety. Brandi had suggested, in transmitting the papers, that probably any other country could secure such concessions just as easily, and it was with this same comment that Ainslie in leisurely fashion forwarded copies to the Foreign Office.²⁴ Upon reflection, however, he considered it wise to take up the matter with the Porte. The effect of this immediately excited his apprehensions. The Reis Effendi displayed great alarm and passion upon being confronted with the documentary evidence of French conspiracies, disavowed the treaties in their entirety, and promised immediate steps to nullify the pact, though a close observer might have noted that his spleen was directed more against the irresponsible Beys than against the contents of the treaties.²⁵

However, for other reasons the French treaty was destined to have no practical consequences. Before the Ottoman Government had devised any effective way of chastising their rebellious feudatories in Egypt, French plans for exploiting the Red Sea route for trade and communications had largely fallen to the ground. French merchants in India remembered too vividly the treachery of the Egyptians on various occasions to venture themselves or their goods in the Egyptian trade. Attempts made by merchants in France to form a trading company for the Egyptian trade were

²¹ Charles-Roux, *Les Origines*, etc., pp. 151-153.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

²³ I. O., Factory Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Correspondence of the East India House.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, "Extracts from Sir Robert Ainslie relative to the Establishment of the French in Egypt."

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Ainslie to Lord Carmarthen, 10 and 25 Nov., 1785.

frustrated by the French East India Company which was just renewing its former chartered monopoly. In 1786 it began preparations for sending cargoes from Indian posts to Suez, but so slowly did these plans mature, that the first cargo arrived at Suez only in March, 1789 — full three years later. Meanwhile the situation in Egypt had undergone a change so complete that the treaties of 1785 had lost such efficacy as they might have possessed at the outset.²⁶

The English Foreign Office did not regard the news of the French treaty with the Beys with a great degree of equanimity. Recent conflicts in India had been too severely contested and French objectives in establishing themselves in Egypt were too potent to escape critical review in London. Already for some years the attitude of the Government and of the East India Company toward the use of the route through Egypt had been undergoing a great change. In 1773 Lord North had seen nothing in the recommendations of James Bruce worthy of the least consideration. No English official raised a protesting voice when the Ottoman Government issued the *firman* of 1777 placing an interdict on the navigation of the Red Sea. But since the stoppage of trade and communication in 1779 the conviction had been growing that the withdrawal from Egypt had been a mistake. The practical convenience of sending and receiving important Indian despatches in one-half or one-third the usual time had left its impress during those few years when the transit through Egypt had been uninterrupted. In 1785 the Red Sea was no longer the wholly unknown body of water it had been fifteen years before. Not only had various travellers published descriptions of it in connection with their travels through Egypt, but such surveys as had been made had also found their way into print.²⁷

The book of Col. James Capper, *Observations on the Passage to India through Egypt and across the Great Desert*, published in 1784, contained strong arguments for the use of a route which had been responsible for English victories over the French in India, and which, had it still been in use when the Peace of Versailles was concluded, would have saved the lives of eighty English officers and more than two thousand men who were killed in use-

²⁶ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 187-192.

²⁷ G. Trotter, *The Harbour and Road of Suez in the Red Sea* (London, 1779); Lieut. Mascall, *Plan of the Harbour and Road of Suez from a Survey of Mascall, 1777, with some additions by Lieut. Harvey* (London, 1782); W. Robinson, *Suez Harbour Surveyed by Captain W. Robinson* (London, 1784); L. S. de la Rochette, *The North West Branch of the Red Sea* (London, 1785).

less battles long after the war had been formally ended.²⁸ Col. Capper believed in the simultaneous employment of the two other routes to India which had been found practicable, that by way of Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf and that around the Cape of Good Hope, but, except during the prevalence of the southwest monsoon, he considered that by way of Egypt essential. Moreover, he gave one telling argument against the Turkish prohibition of the use of the Red Sea: if the Turks could grant to their natural enemies, the Russians, control of the Black Sea and the Dardanelles, how readily might they consent to grant to their friends the right of sending packet vessels to Suez!²⁹

More powerful still were the arguments, supported by the strongest evidence, brought forward by George Baldwin. Since his return from Egypt by way of Constantinople in 1781 he had spent his time in vain endeavors to recover the property he had lost in Egypt and in writing memorials to the Directors of the East India Company, in which he attempted to explain and justify his past conduct. In 1783 his case was taken up by the Court and he was officially exonerated from the charges held against him, the most serious of which were connected with his private trading ventures and his unauthorized chartering of a vessel in 1777 at an exorbitant price to carry despatches to India.³⁰

With his past mistakes thus forgiven, Baldwin devoted himself to the securing of recognition for the route to which he was wholly committed. In 1784 he published a pamphlet entitled, *The Communication with India by the Isthmus of Suez, vindicated from the Prejudices which have prevailed against it.* . . .³¹ In this he showed that "the feats of the East India Company respecting the influx of Indian manufactures by that route to Europe to their prejudice were not well founded; and that the alarm of the Grand Signior for the safety of his empire need not have been aroused by the arrival of six or eight loaded ships per year at the port of Suez."³² In a memoir to be presented to the India Board the following year, Baldwin showed the dangers which might arise from the establishment of France in Egypt.

France, in possession of Egypt [he wrote], would possess the master-key to all the trading nations of the earth. En-

²⁸ 2d ed. (London, 1784).

²⁹ James Capper, *Observations on the Passage to India*, Preface, pp. x-xvii.

³⁰ I. O., Factory Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5. Baldwin's creditors apparently were never reimbursed for their losses.

³¹ Contained in I. O. Factory Records, Vol. 5.

³² In 1783 Baldwin estimated that the total volume of the goods exported by the English from India to Egypt between 1768 and 1782 amounted to £318,600.

lightened as the times are, in the general arts of navigation and commerce, she might make it the *ave* of the eastern world, by the facility she would command of transporting her forces thither, by surprise, in any number, and at any time; and England would hold her possessions in India at the mercy of France.³³

These and many similar observations all tending to show that France would naturally aspire to control Egypt and that this would be a vital matter for Great Britain, exerted a deep influence on the India authorities. Baldwin was asked to prepare other statements showing how British interests might most efficaciously be revived in Egypt. In reply, he sketched his idea of a practicable consular establishment, providing for a consul general at Cairo having power to name deputies or vice-consuls at Alexandria and Suez as the first step. He thought this might be financed in any one of three ways: by reviving the trade from India to Suez and levying a small duty on such goods to be applied to this purpose; by removing the Levant Company's monopoly and applying its annual Parliamentary grant toward the upkeep of the diplomatic establishment; or by requiring the Levant Company to appropriate the necessary funds from its own income.³⁴ Also he prepared at some length a brochure entitled *Observations on the Practicability and Utility of Establishing a Correspondence Overland to India by Way of Suez*,³⁵ in which he pointed out that "Almost the only difficulty in establishing a correspondence overland to India, by way of Suez, is in the navigation of the Red Sea. The regularity of the winds, which make a voyage safe and expeditious at one particular time of year, renders it dangerous, tedious, and almost impracticable at any other."

The decision of the British Government and the East India Company to reestablish a consular office in Egypt took shape, early in 1786, in the formal appointment to the new post of the only person sufficiently capable in every way of fulfilling the needs of the situation. Baldwin's own memoirs were taken as the basis of the instructions issued to him.³⁶ As Consul, Baldwin was enjoined —

³³ Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, p. 79.

³⁴ I. O., Factory Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, Baldwin, on opening the Red Sea Route, 27 Jan., 1785.

³⁵ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, No. 279.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, Dundas mss. Henry Dundas, Chairman of the Court of Directors, estimated the total cost of a monthly communication between England and India at £3850, on the basis of information supplied by Baldwin. He thought messages could be transmitted in either direction within the space of 60 days.

To protect His Majesty's subjects in their Trade and lawful avocations . . . to endeavor to obtain from the Government of Egypt by proper and discreet means, a secure and regular passage through their country for His Majesty's subjects and dispatches — going and coming between England and the East Indies by the Red Sea . . . to watch the motions of the French, and their particular designs . . . [and to] transmit to His Majesty's ministers your discoveries and observations upon their proceedings, which may have a tendency to affect in any shape the interests of Great Britain . . . to prevent as much as in your power lies, the transit of all British Subjects to and from India by the Isthmus of Suez, except only such as bear an authority from Government or East India Company for so doing, it being subject to create disturbances, and to embarrass the free communication intended to be obtained for the Public Services.³⁷

The Court of Directors on their part made out a voluminous set of instructions, governing Baldwin's conduct in every contingency, and including much solid advice. Recalling his former shortcomings it was specifically provided that on no account was he to engage in trade. And to this the Court signed themselves, "Your loving friends."³⁸ "The great end of Mr. Baldwin's residence at Cairo," ran a separate despatch to Sir Robert Ainslie, "is the opening of a communication to India through Egypt."³⁹ In all of these instructions, it is to be noted, a clear distinction was made between purposes of communication and those of transportation. This continued until after the trading monopoly of the Company had been entirely removed and the eastern trade thrown open to the world in the early years of the next century.

There was some question at first whether Baldwin should proceed to Egypt primarily in the capacity of British Consul General or as Agent of the East India Company. If the latter, his salary and expenses would naturally be defrayed by the Company and his despatches would be directed to the Court of Directors rather than to the Foreign Office. After some delay, a joint arrangement was agreed upon whereby Baldwin's activities were to conform to two sets of instructions, but his salary was to be paid by the Company.⁴⁰ He was to be sent out to Egypt accredited

³⁷ *Ibid.*, "Instructions to George Baldwin as Consul to Egypt."

³⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 1359.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, "Heads of Instructions for Mr. Baldwin," 19 May, 1786.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Dundas mss. The Levant Company had become practically a dead concern, subsisting largely on a Parliamentary grant. Baldwin apparently had no commission from this Company during his second official residence at Cairo.

to a Turkish possession, but it was made clear to him that the immediate aim of his work in Egypt was to be a new and separate treaty with the Beys, "which will put His Majesty's Government at least on an equal footing with . . . the French."⁴¹ In fact Baldwin's salary of £500 per year with expenses was to continue only on condition that he negotiate this favorable treaty within a year after his arrival in Egypt. This, then, was the effect of the French treaty of February, 1785; the British were at last prepared to compromise their Turkish policy. The difficult feat was to be tried of riding two eastern horses at once — and animals very much averse from running in the same direction.

Additional preparations were made at Constantinople for the success of his mission before Baldwin's departure for Egypt. The purposes of the new establishment were pointed out to Ainslie, who had already strongly but ineffectually opposed the appointment of Baldwin.⁴² There stood in the way of the enterprise the Turkish *firman*, which commanded the entire cessation of Christian navigation in the Red Sea.⁴³ The instructions sent to Ainslie requested him to make representations to the Porte on the basis of the privileges granted the English in the Capitulation of 1675, which provided, in part,

That the said nations, and the English merchants, and all other nations and merchants that do, or shall arrive under the colors and protection of England with their ships . . . merchandize, effects [etc.], shall at all times sail securely in our seas, and go and come with all manner of safety and freedom to all parts within the limits of our Imperial Domain. . . That the said nation shall likewise freely go and come by land, within the limits of our Imperial Dominions. . . All English ships, great and small, may at all times come and enter any port or harbor whatsoever of our Dominions, and set out from thence when they please. . .⁴⁴

Such preparations for the return of the English to the eastern Mediterranean were well under way when Baldwin, armed with copious instructions, cautions, and advice, sailed on the *Weymouth* from Portsmouth, August 14, 1786, for Egypt. He arrived in

⁴¹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, "Heads of Instructions for Mr. Baldwin," 19 May, 1785.

⁴² Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 207-225.

⁴³ The instructions issued by the Foreign Office to Baldwin on May 19 suggested that, in view of the Capitulations and the French treaty of 1785, he might well ignore the prohibitory *firman*.

⁴⁴ Quoted in I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 5, in a paper entitled "The Communication with India by way of Suez" (1784).

Cairo in December, and discovered immediately that the greater part of his preparations had been to no avail, for a Turkish army was then in Egypt in process of chastising the rebellious Beys, and the entire country was in the utmost confusion. It will be worth while to approach this circumstance from another point of view.

It was little consolation to the Porte that the Beys of Egypt, who had scant regard for the authority of the Sultan, deposed each other in rapid succession. Each *de facto* régime quickly set about exploiting all possible sources of wealth while its authority lasted. Only the inertia characteristic of a government already entering upon a decline and the constant dread of Russian attacks prevented the Turks from taking summary vengeance upon their lawless Egyptian vassals. However, even Turkish patience was exhausted at last. Early in 1786 Murat Bey demanded of the European consuls in Egypt a large sum of money. In case of failure to comply with the demand, the two Franciscan Churches at Alexandria were to be plundered, an expedient suggested by the Russian Consul at Alexandria, Baron de Thonus.⁴⁵ In the face of this danger, the diplomatic corps of the western powers instantly appealed to their superiors at Constantinople to avert the danger. A joint representation was quickly made to the Porte by all the ambassadors of European powers at Constantinople except those representing Sweden and England. Finding the request for intervention coinciding with its own interests at this favorable moment, the Turkish Government determined to take summary and drastic action. The representatives of the powers were reassured this time less by specious promises than by preparations for a campaign of first magnitude. A large fleet was out in readiness to proceed to Egypt, and no less a personage than the Captain Pasha, Hassan, was placed in charge of it.⁴⁶

Ainslie, although taking no part in the request for intervention in Egypt, rejoiced, nevertheless, at the growing prospect of destroying the effects of the French treaty of 1785 with the Beys.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ I. O., Factory Records, Vol. 6, Ainslie, 24 Sept., 1787. Russian activities in Egypt had begun in 1783, when a Russian agent arrived in Egypt bringing power to negotiate a treaty with the Beys whereby Egypt was to be made independent of the Porte and the Russians were to have the right of placing garrisons at Alexandria, Rosetta and Damietta. Negotiations along this line were continued until Baron de Thonus, who had been established as Consul at Alexandria in 1785, provoked the attack on the churches which led to the expedition of the Captain Pasha in 1786.

⁴⁶ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁴⁷ Ainslie to the Foreign Office, 11 and 27 March, 1786, cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

A cardinal feature of English eastern policy — the restoration of Turkish power in Egypt with the consequent widening of English influence — was about to be accomplished. The event too well justified the expectation. Alexandria surrendered to the Turkish forces in July without opposition. Rosetta and Cairo likewise were taken. The forces of Murat and Ibrahim were easily defeated and scattered and they themselves driven to Upper Egypt.⁴⁸ Their rival, Ismail, was installed in power by the Capitan Pasha. After some further resistance and temporary successes early in 1787, Murat and Ibrahim were again defeated, but as the price of submission were allowed to retain two of the provinces of Upper Egypt.⁴⁹ But the news of such an outcome, which would have caused rejoicing in English circles at almost any other time, was received in London with gloom and apprehension. English policy in Egypt had been reversed at the worst possible moment, for Baldwin arrived just at the time when the Turks were overwhelming the Beys with whom he was instructed to negotiate an independent treaty.

Baldwin had no difficulty in securing his recognition by virtue of the consular *berat* which he bore, and after his reception at Alexandria he proceeded presently to Cairo. Here he appointed agents for the ports at Alexandria and Suez, secured an Arab writer and interpreter, and was soon ready to take advantage of that fortunate clause in his instructions which enabled him to negotiate with whatever authorities there might be in Egypt. There seemed to be but one course to pursue, now that the Turks were actually in possession of the country. This plan was to demand boldly the privileges which had once been granted the English in the Capitulations to trade in all Turkish ports.⁵⁰ On March 6, 1787, Baldwin was received in audience by the Capitan Pasha, and the case was stated frankly.

The reputation of your armes and the promises of order which your government bring to the country have determined the King of England . . . to name me his consul general in Egypt, in order to restore with vigor the rights belonging to his subjects, conformably to his binding Capitulations with the Sublime Porte, particularly the right of navigating the Red Sea and of frequenting all the ports situated on the shores of that sea. In consequence, I beg of Your Excellence to proclaim the wish of the Sublime Porte that

⁴⁸ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6, Ainslie, 25 Aug., 1786; Baldwin, Jan. 1787.

⁴⁹ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-233, *passim*.

⁵⁰ F. O., 24/1, Baldwin to Lord Carmarthen, 12 Jan., 1787.

all functionaries of government and all subjects living under its law second and assist the British nation in the free exercise of the rights pertaining to it.⁵¹

To this Hassan replied ingeniously that such a matter would remain for the Porte to decide. However, not to cause delay, he would see that the English were not molested in the exercise of their rights while his authority remained in Egypt.

A problem soon arose. A Christian ("Frank") vessel was sighted in the Red Sea. Supposing that this would be an English vessel, Baldwin besought the Capitan Pasha to permit its reception at Suez. This was not to Hassan's taste, for he had been given copies of the prohibitory *firman* of 1779 before leaving Constantinople. Nevertheless, being a shrewd man, he ruled that whatever vessel arrived, it should receive no harm during his sway in Egypt.⁵² The vessel proved to be the French frigate *Venus* bearing despatches from India. After some hesitation, Hassan authorized the landing of despatches and messengers, but insisted that the vessel sail shortly from Suez — an injunction carefully acted upon. Baldwin raised no objection to this arrangement, believing that such a precedent might be an advantage to his own countrymen. Indeed, he even took occasion to send despatches of his own to India by the return voyage of the vessel.

The Capitan Pasha had indicated that only some evidence of consent on the part of the Porte was necessary to the free use of the route through Egypt.⁵³ The real responsibility for the re-opening of the route through Egypt, now that Egypt was largely under Turkish authority once more, devolved upon Ainslie. He was slow and unwilling to act, feeling the inconsistency of the new position he was expected to take with that he had so long maintained. News of the landing of the *Venus* and the passage through Egypt of her despatches and passengers, however, gave him ground for broaching the matter. Approaching the Reis Effendi with the statement that Great Britain would expect the same rights in the Red Sea as the French, he was curtly informed that no rights had been accorded the French, and that an investigation would be made of the *Venus* affair.⁵⁴ Ainslie there-

⁵¹ F. O., 24/1, Baldwin, 11 April, 1787.

⁵² I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6, Baldwin, 20 April, 1787.

⁵³ He seems to have been perfectly well aware, however, that the Porte was unlikely to grant this, but as his own stay in Egypt was likely to be brief, it shifted the responsibility to Constantinople and made it possible for him to accept sundry valuable presents from Baldwin with good grace.

⁵⁴ F. O., Turkey, Vol. 8, Ainslie, 9, 25 June, 10 July, 1787; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-246.

upon weakly refrained from following his instructions and demanding the right as based on the Capitulations. Time, he believed, would play into his hands, and he waited the issue of events in Egypt.

Under the circumstances, it was natural that two men, never friendly, both kept completely in the dark by the intricacies of Turkish statesmen who were well aware of the purpose of Baldwin's mission to Egypt,⁵⁵ should find the cause of failure in the other. Baldwin complained repeatedly that none of his letters to the Ambassador at the Porte was answered, and that Sir Robert had apparently done nothing toward securing that slight evidence of assent on the part of the Porte which would suffice for a guarantee of safety of navigation from the Capitan Pasha. Ainslie accused Baldwin of lack of caution in his negotiations and again suspected him of private mercantile operations. Both gave presents lavishly and remained optimistic as to the eventual success of the plan, particularly since the threatening moves of Russia would make the Turks desirous of English support.⁵⁶

In London, meanwhile, preparations were being made for making use of the overland route with little regard to the possibility of the failure of negotiations with Ottoman authorities. In spite of the Turkish expedition to Egypt, the tone of the despatches of both Ainslie and Baldwin, to cover up their inability to make real headway, had remained hopeful, and this doubtless influenced the home authorities to believe that no serious obstacles existed to the reopening of communication through Egypt. Their industry in making all arrangements for the official use of the line was stimulated, not only by the unsettled state of Europe, but by news from various quarters of the East. Lord William Murray, who had come back from India through Egypt early in 1787, brought word of the willingness of the native rulers of Mecca and Jeddah to assist in a regular navigation of the Red Sea by English ships.⁵⁷ Word also came that Basrah had been taken by an Arab sheik, who had arrested and imprisoned the Turkish authorities and so made himself master of all lower Mesopotamia.⁵⁸ This was looked upon as closing the route through Mesopotamia to emergency messages, making the route through Egypt more essential still. In addition, reports from

⁵⁵ Even the English Consul at Smyrna, Hayes, was able to keep in touch with developments in Egypt through the rumors reaching him from Turkish sources. F. O., Vol. 8, Ainslie, 24 July, 1787.

⁵⁶ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 251-252.

⁵⁷ F. O., 24/1, Baldwin, 2 July, 1787.

⁵⁸ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

Egypt spoke of the arrival of another French vessel at Suez, a merchantman, which only awaited an opportunity to discharge a cargo for the Cairo market.⁵⁹

The Foreign Office, in consequence, took up with the Post Office the matter of utilizing the Red Sea route for despatches, and through this department negotiated with the Board of Control and the East India Company. Plans prepared in May and June, 1787, looked toward one annual voyage in each direction, beginning in 1788. Despatches bound for India would be sent from London in June, and those destined for England would leave India in December to take advantage of the most favorable conditions. Livorna was selected as the Mediterranean port for the communication with Egypt, the roads connecting that town with the Channel being suitable for the purpose. Rates of postage were agreed upon, and necessary Parliamentary legislation was outlined for the ensuing session.⁶⁰

It required the exigencies of war to make these plans of particular significance. In the autumn of the year 1787 was commenced the war between Turkey and Russia which had been brewing for some years. Early in October the Capitan Pasha, who had been expecting the summons, was hastily recalled to Constantinople. There ensued at the Porte a strange, but quite characteristic, illustration of Ottoman diplomacy. The Capitan Pasha, feigning great enthusiasm for the English, promised Ainslie the satisfaction of his wishes with respect to the navigation of the Red Sea. Definite action was delayed, however, by the alleged discovery of a British engagement to supply Russia with ships and marine forces in the opening war against Turkey.⁶¹ No sooner had this excuse lost its efficacy than the Turks justified further delay on the ground that the French (far less worthy than the English!) were demanding the same privilege. Finally the whole matter was referred to a Divan, an extraordinary meeting of Turkish Ministers, where the opening of the Red Sea was adjudged inopportune at that time. Thus the assumption of collective responsibility made the tortuous path of individual ministers easier.

Ainslie was slow to discern in all these manœuvres a definite and concerted plan to retain the friendship of the English Government, to promote the further giving of largesses, and otherwise to play one European government off against another without giving

⁵⁹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6, Baldwin, 16 Oct., 1787.

⁶⁰ F. O., 24/1, Lord Carmarthen, 17 May, Lord Cartaret, 6 June, 1787; I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6, Ainslie, 25 Oct., 1787; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 260.

⁶¹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6, Baldwin, 16 Oct., 1787.

real satisfaction to any. But when, after nearly a year of futile but always promising negotiations the real goal of British policy was apparently as far from being reached as ever, Ainslie concluded that he had been unwittingly led on, and to save the remainder of his prestige, decided to cease making presents and to suspend his activities. Although reports reached him in October and November, 1788, that the Government of India proposed to send vessels to Suez early in the following year on the chance that arrangements with Turkish authorities would be completed in the meantime, he took no steps toward soliciting permission for their reception at Suez.⁶²

The burning question of the right of employing the route through Egypt for despatches, if not for merchandise, was finally solved in a manner characteristically Turkish. While no formal permission would be granted by the Porte, it gradually became apparent, after the return of the Capitan Pasha to Constantinople, that infringements of the prohibitory *firman* of 1779 would be overlooked. Naturally, the Turkish administration in Cairo became aware of this attitude, and in April, 1788, Baldwin was able to report to his Government —

I have succeeded in obtaining from the government at Cairo the authorization, for all passengers and despatches arriving at Suez by the packet boats of the Company, to disembark freely and to pass through the country without being molested. I have sent official orders to Suez to that effect. And if this government comes to be replaced by another, I have no doubt that I shall obtain the same permission.⁶³

This Baldwin believed to be essentially what he had been sent to Egypt to obtain and he had little doubt that it would lead to an immediate resumption of activity at Suez. He also assumed that there would be as little objection to the revival of the trade to Egypt as to the passage of passengers and mails. Indeed, he reported in February, 1789, that loaded French vessels had been allowed to discharge their cargoes at Suez and that he was arranging for the reception of two English trading vessels reported

⁶² Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 273-274. Ainslie himself was to a considerable degree responsible for this determination on the part of the Government of India, since such action was inspired by the reflected optimism of his reports to the Foreign Office. Still, Baldwin deserves a fair share of credit or blame, as the case may be, for having spoken in his despatches to India of the "solemn assurance" given him by the Capitan Pasha that the right to navigate the Red Sea would soon be forthcoming.

⁶³ F. O., 24/1, Baldwin 2 or 8 April, 1788, quoted in Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 287-288.

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coming from India. "The passage through Egypt," he said, "is free whenever the Company want to make use of it."⁶⁴

At the moment when Baldwin flattered himself he had attained the long coveted goal, when he was able to report that the Red Sea was open to English vessels, and when he was effectively obstructing the activities of the French,⁶⁵ events were making which tended to nullify his efforts. The plan concerted in 1787 by the Foreign Office with the Post Office and Board of Control was, for some reason, never put into execution.⁶⁶ In 1790, an intensive survey was made by a committee of the Privy Council of English trade with Turkish territories, with particular attention to Egypt. In the report of the Committee on October 19,⁶⁷ Egypt was described as a country of great potentialities, "the entrepôt and the only channel" by which commercial relations had long been maintained between Europe and Asia. But the existing trade of the country was described as of little importance, particularly to Great Britain. The fear was expressed also that goods from India imported through Egypt and sold in Europe might dangerously undersell goods brought by way of the Cape of Good Hope.⁶⁸ The opinion was stated that profitable trade with Egypt alone could never be revived until a better political order had been established there, and as the Turkish administration of Ismail was giving way before the growing strength of the rebellious Beys, Murat and Ibrahim, this time appeared to be distant. But in view of Russian and French designs on Egypt at that moment, designs at which George Baldwin had correctly guessed and had widely advertised, the report concluded with the astonishing statement that even if the Turks were unable to reassert their authority in Egypt, Great Britain would need to take steps for safeguarding her interests by means of a treaty only when some other power had become master.

This report attached no importance whatever to the matter of

⁶⁴ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Alexandria, 23 Feb., 1789.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Alexandria, 21 June, 1790. This has reference to the detention in Egypt for a considerable time of two French agents, St. Leger and Colier, whom Baldwin suspected of bearing despatches which boded ill for the Company's possessions in India.

⁶⁶ See Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 300.

⁶⁷ Contained in F. O., Turkey, 11, Report of the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council Relative to the Trade with Turkey, 19 October, 1790; cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

⁶⁸ This, apparently, represented the opinion of the Levant Company, which furnished most of the data on which the report was based. The East India Company had already reached the conclusion that no dangerous competition was to be anticipated by this route.

transmitting despatches through Egypt, its only concern touching the profits which might be derived from trade with that country. Its influence on the whole policy of the British Government with respect to Egypt was, nevertheless, profound; and when, in 1792, the new-born French Republic found it essential, in the face of a hostile European coalition, to determine to maintain both postal and commercial contact with India by way of the Red Sea, the English authorities were preparing to withdraw from Egypt their only establishment — that of the Consulate.

The first suggestions of Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary, to Henry Dundas, Secretary of War and President of the Board of Control, that since the consular office in Egypt was useless and expensive it should be suppressed, met with counter suggestions.⁶⁹ The attack was repeated in 1793. On this occasion, Lord Grenville remarked that if the services of Baldwin were sufficiently valuable to the East India Company to warrant its assumption of the cost of the establishment, the consular post might be continued, otherwise not. This argument was conclusive. Neither the Company nor the India Board cared to add to their budgets the sum of £2000 annually. On February 8, 1793, therefore, a despatch was issued from the Foreign Office terminating Baldwin's appointment as British Consul and suspending his functions.

This action was taken at an awkward time. On January 31, 1793, war was declared between Great Britain and France, making a *liaison* between London and the Indian Presidencies far more essential than at any time since the establishment of Baldwin's post. Lord Grenville had scarcely ceased denouncing the consular office as useless when Baldwin demonstrated its value in striking fashion. Upon receipt of the news that hostilities would soon commence, he instantly despatched it to India before the French garrison were aware of the state of affairs in Europe, enabling the English to capture Pondicherry, and "to expel the French from India, and to decide the fate of the war in that country a second time, and to the great honour and incalculable advantage of England."⁷⁰ The news of this action caused Dundas to reopen with the Foreign Office the matter of maintaining the consular post in Egypt. He suggested in this correspondence that the India Board might find means of continuing the establishment and of supporting Baldwin who had shown himself so zealous in imperial matters. This plan, however, appears to have been but a generous hope: Lord Grenville did not revert again

⁶⁹ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 315, based on papers contained in the Fortescue Manuscripts preserved at Dropmore — the "*Dropmore Papers*" — vol. II.

⁷⁰ George Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, p. 28.

to the matter and the burden was not assumed by India Board or East India Company.⁷¹

Fortunately for the British cause, Baldwin did not abandon his post, because, for some unknown reason, he failed to receive the edict of deposition of February 8, 1793. It was only several months later when the Foreign Office refused to honor an expense account that he became aware that some unfavorable action had been taken. He had been ill for some time previously; and this turn of affairs caused him to make preparations to return to England. But at this juncture, his personal representative in England was orally requested to the Foreign Office to ask Baldwin to remain at his post during the war with France, his expenses being paid as before. This Baldwin interpreted as meaning that his consular position had been confirmed, and he continued to act as though no interruption had occurred.⁷²

Under such an arrangement, which savored strongly of oriental equivocation, Baldwin could hardly have rested easily. Although he could protest that he had faithfully served the interests of his country and had obstructed the purposes of its enemies, the fact remained that he had never been able to execute the principal injunction in the instructions issued to him when he became consul. This was to negotiate a treaty with such authorities as might be in control in Egypt. Such a reflection must have been at the bottom of a treaty drawn up between himself and the restored Beys, Murat and Ibrahim, in May, 1794, the text of which was transmitted to London with but few explanatory remarks.⁷³ The treaty had been so long delayed, it was pointed out, because of the lack of stability in Egyptian politics and because of the obstinacy of Sir Robert Ainslie, who had refused to coöperate with Baldwin when a treaty might have been obtained earlier.

As for the document itself, it followed closely the lines of the treaty obtained from the Beys in 1785 by Truguet. In providing for freedom of navigation of the Red Sea and the landing of articles of trade at Suez, it represented the same objective on the part of the Beys as the treaty of 1785, namely, their hope of making capital of the revival of trade through customs duties. Freedom of transit through Egypt for mails and passengers was readily conceded, but in this the Beys were not at all interested, as it produced no revenue. In fact, it was made to appear that

⁷¹ *Dropmore Papers*, II, 621, cited as above.

⁷² I. O., Factory Records, Baldwin, 10 Oct., 1794.

⁷³ F. O., 24/1, Willis, 20 (29?) May, 1794, cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 318. Baldwin was suffering from the prevalent disease of ophthalmia at this time, hence his correspondence was entirely in the hands of his secretary, Richard Willis.

the transit through Egypt should be only a means to an end — the end being a revival of English trade, which had been practically nil in Egypt since 1779. For the encouragement of trade, the English were to enjoy the position of most-favored nation. Other features were the usual ones: anchorage fees, collection of customs, exemptions.

As to the duties themselves, those of 3% specified in the Capitulations were to be levied for the Ottoman Government, and additional duties of 6% for the Beys. Half of the 6% tax was to be paid by English merchants, half by the native purchasers at the Cairo mart.⁷⁴ In submitting the treaty to the Foreign Office, Baldwin's secretary pointed out that the communication through Egypt, which had been the source of British interest in Egypt for a number of years, would be safe only if it had the accompaniment of trade. Obviously the Beys had made strong representations on that point.

Almost at the moment the treaty was concluded, the British cruiser *Panther* arrived at Suez with Bombay despatches for the Court of Directors in London. This happy incident served several purposes.⁷⁵ It enabled Baldwin to send a copy of the new treaty to London by a courier from Bombay, Major Macdonald, it gave an opportunity for the Beys to demonstrate their coöperation, as it seemed to them to presage the arrival of merchant ships in the near future, and it permitted Baldwin to advertise in the presidencies the new commercial engagement. Upon the return of the *Panther* to India at the end of August, Baldwin despatched his secretary, Willis, to the Council of Bombay, bearing a memorial on the opportunity which now offered for the reopening of the trade with Egypt. In this, taking for granted the approval of the home authorities, Baldwin assured the Governor and Council of Bombay of the likelihood that his treaty with the Beys would be ratified at the Porte, now that Sir Robert Ainslie had been replaced by Robert Lisbon as Ambassador. The trade with Egypt, he pointed out, was safe, in any case. Finally, he appealed for a show of the revival of trade in order to safeguard the route through Egypt, if for no other purpose.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ The substance of the treaty is contained in Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 320-323.

⁷⁵ I. O., Factory Records, Vol. 6, Despatch from Alexandria, 10 April, 1793. Maj. Macdonald was the bearer of only a portion of the despatches destined for London. The others were intrusted to Baldwin to forward as best he might. The originals he sent on to London by way of Constantinople, expecting to send duplicates by another route. The originals apparently did not reach their destination. Baldwin was too ill to exert himself with regard to the duplicates, and he had no authority to hire a vessel, in any event. It was only in November, 1797, that these were sent on to London by a chance traveller.

⁷⁶ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 324-325.

Next Baldwin turned his attention to securing the formal assent of the Porte to the proposed resumption of trading operations. Baldwin's reflection on this point had counselled tact. "I presume, my Lord," he wrote to Lord Grenville on October 10, 1794, "that it will be sufficient to demand the privilege of coming to Suez, as well as any other port belonging to the Grand Seignior, as an article already included in the Capitulations, without requesting the sanction of our treaty with the beys."¹⁷ With all this he thought fully to justify the establishment of the consular office in Egypt and to secure the continuation of the post, which would, he said, with the development of the projected trade, produce a revenue which would cover the cost of the establishment.

All these efforts, however, were to no avail. Baldwin did not receive even a note of acknowledgment from the Foreign Office after the treaty had been forwarded from Egypt. The records of the Foreign Office and of the East India Company give no indication that the existence of the treaty was ever mentioned in any of the despatches to the British Ambassador at Constantinople. Eight years earlier the hope of accomplishing such a treaty had been the principal factor in the establishment of the English consulate in Egypt. Now the consummation of this hope was ignored utterly. The reasons for this neglect in 1794 are not definitely known, but they may be conjectured with some degree of confidence. In the first place, Sir Robert Ainslie was in London, in the good graces of the Foreign Office, and he would naturally have used all of his influence to discredit Baldwin. In the second place, with the exception of the message sent to India in 1792 leading to the capture of Pondicherry, few messages of importance had passed through Egypt in late years, and those were in many instances long in reaching their destination. Since merchant vessels no longer sailed to Egypt at frequent intervals, messages had to be despatched, on the oriental side of Egypt, either in British or Company's vessels of war or in native boats. The former method was far too expensive for frequent communication, while the latter was altogether unreliable. At best, the communication between India and Egypt had to be seasonal, due to the fury of the southwest monsoon.

Doubtless there were other contributing factors. The frequent changes of control in Egypt during the last quarter of the century were not calculated to inspire great faith in the permanence or stability of any particular régime or in faithful adherence to its treaty engagements. Moreover, having taken the step of suppressing the consular office at a time when no treaty was in sight,

¹⁷ F. O., 24/1, Baldwin, 10 Oct., 1794; cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

the Foreign Office could scarcely restore the post merely because of the sudden appearance of a document of questionable intrinsic value. Even the commercial possibilities seemed slight. The English had no commercial establishments in any part of Egypt, and those established there long before by the French were languishing. Nor did the prospect of a revival of trade appeal to English interests in India as it had in the days of Warren Hastings. Baldwin's appeal to Bombay for merchant vessels fell on ears nearly as deaf as those at the Foreign Office in London. It has already been indicated that the prospect of French or Russian preponderance in the eastern Mediterranean caused no such emotions of fear and anxiety as recurred again and again during the course of the nineteenth century.⁷⁸ Thus, the various considerations which had led to the abolition of the consular establishment were sufficiently numerous and weighty to prevent any serious reconsideration of the action.⁷⁹

Although the British Government after 1786 steadily lost interest in Egypt, discovering there neither attractive commercial opportunities nor a reliable and essential high road to India, other European powers were less short-sighted. It was very generally believed on the continent that the Ottoman Empire would not survive another major war without breaking up, and already estimates were being made of the division of spoil. In this Russia was particularly forehanded. Having already acquired considerable portions both of Polish and Turkish territory, her appetite was thereby made the keener for further acquisitions which might lead to the much-coveted seaport on the Mediterranean.⁸⁰ France, having had no taste of Turkish blood, was anxious for one.⁸¹

As early as 1785, when another Russo-Turkish war was in prospect, suggestions were made for a partition of Turkish territories. The French Ambassador at St. Petersburg was approached with the proposal that France take over certain Mediterranean portions of Turkey in the event of war. The French Govern-

⁷⁸ See above, pp. 9, 12, 17.

⁷⁹ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 330, calls attention to the additional fact that Baldwin, during his term as consul, had not literally obeyed his instructions. Whereas he had been directed to reside at the native capital, Cairo, he had, as a matter of fact, lived at Alexandria. Moreover, as I have pointed out above, the continuation of his office was to depend upon his success in negotiating a treaty at once. The fact that this was altogether impracticable did not place on the British Government any obligation to continue the establishment.

⁸⁰ See William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors, 1801-1922*, pp. 7-16, *et passim*.

⁸¹ Charles-Roux, *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte*, pp. 137-145.

ment, although visibly interested, did not follow up the proposal.⁸² When war actually broke out between Russia and Turkey in 1787, however, the successor of the great Vergennes, Montmorin, was besieged with plans for French annexation of Cyprus, Candia, Crete, and even Egypt. Some of these owed their details to the fear that England, which power obviously had great interests at stake in Egypt, would take over that country, and the reëstablishment of the consulate and the contemporaneous publication in England of various books and pamphlets on the value of Egypt to England gave color to the suspicion.⁸³

Whatever impulse the French Government may have had to embark on a career of conquest in the eastern Mediterranean was held in abeyance by the financial condition of France, which made aggression on a large scale quite beyond the bounds of possibility. Even the matter of establishing a route through Egypt for despatches had to be discarded for the same general reason: packet boats which did not pay their own way by the cargoes they carried proved to be expensive luxuries. So it was with France as with Great Britain; "the project of conquering or occupying Egypt remained only a project, seductive without doubt, but adventurous and above all prohibited."⁸⁴

The Russian Government, under Catherine the Great, was unlike that of France in being embarrassed neither by scruple nor by dearth of funds. Being particularly anxious to secure a hold on the Mediterranean, every prospect of obtaining such a prize was carefully canvassed. Unexpectedly Egypt became a land of promise. In 1785 a group of Beys, led by the irrepressible Ibrahim, determined to secure independence, if possible, by means of foreign alliance. For that reason they entered into secret negotiations with Russia, confiding their plans meanwhile to Baldwin. The Russian Consul, the Baron de Thonus, handled the situation awkwardly enough, and suggested appealing to Austria for assistance. The Porte, meanwhile, aware of these schemes, sent reënforcements to Egypt to support their tottering régime and to await the anticipated Russian attack. It did not at once materialize. During the course of the subsequent Russo-Turkish War, however, when Egypt was practically defenceless, a significant gesture was made. In August, 1788, a Russian frigate of forty guns, accompanied by two transports bearing arms, munitions and gifts appeared before the town of Damietta, di-

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

⁸³ Works by the well-known travellers, Volney and Savary, for instance. Even the practicability of an isthmian or a Nile canal to open an all-water route was considered in the former.

⁸⁴ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 279.

rected by the former consul, Baron de Thonus. The French agent at Damietta immediately placed himself at the service of the Russians, "whether through a national interest in the Russian design or through imbecility, I do not know," said Baldwin.⁸⁵

The purpose of the Russians apparently was to encourage the Beys to undertake a general revolt against Turkey. But the project met an early death. The subtlety of the Turkish creature, Ismail, was more than a match for the bluster of the Russian agents, and the affair ended with the temporary incarceration of both Baron de Thonus and the French agent. The main Russian fleet, which had been advertised by the Russian Consul, did not appear in Egyptian waters, and Ismail remained for the time being master of the situation.⁸⁶ The first Russian overture to the Beys had a sequel, however, which smacked of *opéra bouffe*. In January, 1790, Ainslie was instructed from the British Foreign Office to inform the Porte of an astounding plan of the Russians for the conquest of Egypt. It was no less than a plan to despatch from Kronstadt a high seas fleet of eight vessels of war around the Cape of Good Hope to the Red Sea under the Dutch flag. Jeddah and Yambo were to be destroyed, Mecca and Medina pillaged, the tomb of Mohammed violated, and Egypt threatened.⁸⁷ There indeed appeared no likelihood that adequate measures could be taken for averting such a powerful blow, and while the Turks displayed great excitement, practically nothing was done. On this as on many other occasions Turkish apathy remained unpunished. No Russian fleet appeared in the Red Sea, and the enterprise of the Baron de Thonus remained the only naval exploit in Egyptian waters. Baldwin, who had taken the whole Russian episode philosophically enough, returned to his denunciation of French machinations.

For the time being, French designs were hardly to be feared. In 1789 occurred the *déluge* anticipated for years, which completely swept away the *ancien régime*. But the National Assembly proved to be an apt student of international affairs, and readily gave ear to a memorial submitted by the French merchants in the Levant in 1790.

If the French abandon Cairo [they said], the communication with the East Indies is interrupted; our vessels will no longer bring to Suez the cloths of Bengal. This commerce,

⁸⁵ Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 292.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 292-294.

⁸⁷ F. O., Turkey, 11, The Duke of Leeds to Ainslie, 8 Jan., 1790; cited in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

which has caused so much anxiety to the English Company, which, better directed, could give them a mortal blow, is lost for France.⁸⁸

To avoid this loss, the merchants asked that a new treaty be signed with Turkey, based on the Capitulations, enjoining the Egyptian authorities from placing obstacles in the way of commercial operations. It was even suggested that a small French fleet, blockading the Mediterranean ports of Egypt, or the seizure of the annual supply fleet from Jeddah to Suez, could quickly bring the Beys to terms. By such means would the French be entrenched in Egypt. "Cairo offers an easy communication with the East Indies, and the port of Suez would be fatal to the English. . . The colossus which the English have raised in Bengal would be thrown down."⁸⁹

However, the following years were dark for the French in the Levant. The French East India Company lost its chartered privileges. French trade fell off. French merchants, deprived of the protection of a firm government, were mistreated in eastern markets where formerly they had been courted. The vigor of the National Convention gave hope that such wrongs would be redressed, and a new memorial was sent to the Marine Department in 1793 reiterating the necessity of keeping hold of strategic points in Egypt, by armed force, if necessary.⁹⁰ This appeal, being more timely, was more effective than the preceding. Its immediate effect was to bring about the reëstablishment of the French Consulate at Cairo, which had been suppressed since 1777. The choice for this position was the merchant Magallon, who was gazetted consul on the thirtieth of January, 1793, nine days prior to the date of the letter from the British Foreign Office which relieved Baldwin of his position as Consul General in Egypt.⁹¹ It was these developments which produced new despairing protests to the English Government against the abandonment of Egypt. In January, 1795, Sir William Sidney Smith, brother of Spencer Smith, secretary of the British Embassy at the Porte, memorialized the Foreign Office on the plans of the French and the likelihood that they would be able to revive the old trade route through Egypt to the great detriment of the English. This the Foreign Minister was slow to believe. It did not appear

⁸⁸ Archives of the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles, quoted in Charles-Roux, *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte*, p. 225.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.

⁹⁰ Archives, Affaires Étrangères, Cairo, 1 Feb., 1793; quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 248-250.

⁹¹ Charles-Roux, *Les Origines*, etc., p. 252.

probable that the French Republic would be able to execute such a project, or that it would jeopardize its influence at Constantinople by military action in Egypt. In London the matter was allowed to rest.

The reestablishment of a French consulate at Cairo did not lead to better relations with the Beys. Indeed, it resulted in no immediate advantages to French merchants in Egypt, who found it necessary to remain in Alexandria for their safety. The rejuvenated French Government, however, proved to be more persistent than the Bourbon monarchy had been. In October, 1795, a special agent, Dubois-Thainville arrived at Alexandria for the purpose of treating directly with the Beys for the opening of a regular trade and communication between Suez and India. These negotiations, coming to the ears of Baldwin, led him to see a plan for attacking India through Egypt — a plan which he communicated at once to the British Foreign Office, suggesting that a consular office might still be of service. Although this produced only a terse statement from London reiterating the suppression of Baldwin's former office, he still loyally used his influence with the Beys to defeat Dubois-Thainville's project. In 1801 Baldwin noted in his *Political Recollections* that "In 1796 a certain Tinville arrived in Cairo to inveigle the Beys of Egypt into the designs of the French, and particularly to obtain consent to their project of passing an army through Egypt, to the East Indies, by the Red Sea, in order to strengthen Tipoo (the Sultan of Mysore), and finally to annihilate the British Dominion in the East Indies."⁹² However true that may have been, it anticipated such an attempt only by a matter of two years.

The lack of success in treating with the Beys of Egypt at last led the French to make a serious study of the purpose Baldwin had so long attributed to them. Magallon had already pointed the way. In 1795 he wrote —

Masters of the Red Sea, we should not be long in giving the law to the English and in ousting them from India. . . . By way of Suez, during the favorable monsoon, a quantity of troops could be transported to India with few vessels. Our soldiers would not need to be on the sea more than sixty days, instead of, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, a matter of six months. By way of Suez we should not lose one man in a hundred; by the other way, we should be very fortunate not to lose ten per cent.⁹³

⁹² George Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, p. 28.

⁹³ 17 June, 1795, quoted in Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., pp. 342-343.

And later he stated to the Commissioner of Foreign Relations —

Departing from Toulon on the 20th of June, French troops could be at Alexandria on the 10th of July, at Cairo about the 20th, at Suez about the 25th, forty-five days later in India, before the English would have had time to take any defensive measure. Ten thousand French newly arrived from Europe, in a single campaign, would chase them out entirely from Bengal, where they have their principal military establishment.⁹⁴

It was these letters of Magallon's which led to a detailed investigation by the French Directory of the practicability of acting on such recommendations. The idea of a military and naval expedition to Egypt began to emerge from the realm of speculation and to assume a garb of definiteness. The continued arrival of English vessels at Suez at irregular intervals, bearing despatches and, in some instances, articles of trade, spurred on the plan.⁹⁵ Magallon was recalled from Egypt to contribute his counsels to the scheme. By the end of 1797 the idea of an expedition direct to Egypt and on to India was far advanced toward completion. Only George Baldwin remained as an English bulwark between France and India, and his services were nearing an end.⁹⁶ He was old, feeble, and nearly blind, and now that he was long out of profitable employment his resources were very meagre. But before the impending stroke was delivered by his enemies the French, to whose undoing he had devoted the better portion of his life, even he had left Egypt to spend his last days in his own country, which had rewarded his services so poorly.

⁹⁴ 1 Oct., 1795.

⁹⁵ Baldwin, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 341.

⁹⁶ Baldwin's last patriotic service, according to his own account, was the despatch of information concerning the departure from Europe of a fleet of Dutch transports, bound for the Cape of Good Hope, to Admiral Elphinstone, then in command of an English fleet in Indian waters. This enabled the English to capture the Dutch off the Cape and so to save Cape Colony for the English. — Baldwin, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

CHAPTER III

BLOWS AT BRITAIN'S "FEET OF CLAY"

IN THE decade between 1788 and 1798 there were few developments of note in Egypt. Trading vessels continued to arrive at Red Sea ports at distant intervals, and packets of despatches crossed Egypt back and forth *en route* to India or England.¹ George Baldwin's treaty with the Beys in 1794, although ignored in England, still exerted some slight influence on the use of the overland route.² After the French declaration of war in 1793 unusual care had to be exercised in sending English vessels to Egyptian waters, but few interruptions of the route were due to French interference during this interval.

The French Revolution made no appreciable change in French policy or practice in the East. Those Frenchmen who had served under the old régime of Louis XVI became the loyal servants of the Revolution and were spurred on to increased activity. The new wave of proselytism inaugurated by revolutionary France coincided very nearly with the policy of non-intervention in Asiatic states long planned by the East India Company and now seriously undertaken by the Governor-General of India, Sir John Shore. Such a policy of retrenchment created the inevitable impression of British decadence among the native potentates in India and western Asia and thus played into the hands of the French. In several instances alliances were formed between France and oriental states for the purpose of driving out the English. The spring of 1798 saw the defection of several of the most powerful of the Indian states. Among these was Mysore, whose Sultan, Tipoo Sahib, gladly employed the services of French officers in the training of his troops in modern warfare against the day when the coöperation of French forces would make possible the complete expulsion of the English from India.³

¹ I. O. Factory Records, Egypt and Red Sea, Vol. 6, despatch of 5 Apr., 1798; J. S. Buckingham, *Travels in Palestine*. . . (London, 1821), pp. viii, ix.

² F. Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez, et l'Égypte*, p. 367.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 348, 360, 364.

By the time French plans were ripe for invading Egypt, the outlook for British interests in Asia was decidedly dark.

The Napoleonic expedition to Egypt in May, 1798, which so astonished the world and left such a train of important consequences, did not spring solely from the ambition and genius of the Corsican, as many contemporaries believed. Rather, it was the logical outgrowth of a generation of French policy in the Levant translated into action by peculiarly favorable circumstances both in Europe and in the East. Earlier French traders and strategists had advocated the seizure of Egypt for the commercial advantages which would be sure to follow, or to forestall a similar move on the part of the English to control the trade of the Red Sea or to keep open a route of communications. But after 1792 the project was considered by the French Directory as a means of striking a vital blow at Great Britain. "Egypt," argued the Marquis de Talleyrand, "offers us, besides, the means of ousting the English from India by sending a body of 15,000 troops from Cairo by way of Suez."⁴ By the beginning of the year 1798 the idea of attacking the English in India by way of Egypt had sprung up spontaneously in several quarters, since the despatch of a French fleet by way of the Cape of Good Hope was obviously impracticable.⁵

Such a plan could not but appeal to the master strategist Napoleon Bonaparte, in whose fertile mind the details of such an operation were maturing while he was still unaware of the study devoted to the project for years by various officials of government. In the belief that he was broaching a novel plan, Bonaparte wrote to the Directors in August, 1797, his conviction that "The times are not distant when we feel that, in order really to destroy England, it will be necessary to seize Egypt."⁶ But already the Directors had before them a great deal of information bearing on the value of Egypt and the means of acquiring that country, and were more than half convinced of the practicability of attempting such a daring stroke in that direction. It required only the discovery of the obstacles in the way of a direct invasion of England to bring Bonaparte and the Directory into full accord upon the advisability of a quick, powerful and secret blow at Egypt.⁷

⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 369.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

⁶ Le Baron I. de Testa, *Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottomane* . . . I, 516.

⁷ F. Charles-Roux, *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte*, p. 341. This author, who has made a careful and accurate study of the factors involved, believes that the expedition to Egypt, in spite of long continued plans, would not have been undertaken in 1798 if France had not been at war with England and had not found it impracticable to make a direct attack on that country.

Such a course was determined upon on April 12, 1798, and preparations were immediately begun. Armaments were prepared at Toulon, Corsica, various Italian ports, and Corfu. Many of the troops of the "army of England" were reorganized into the "army of the Orient." Diplomatic plans kept pace with military and naval preparations. Despatches couched in glowing terms were sent express to restive rulers of the East to inform them that the day of deliverance from the British yoke was near.⁸ Statements were prepared to legitimize an unprovoked attack on an Ottoman territory. For this purpose, it was made to appear that "the Beys of Egypt, who have themselves seized the government of Egypt, have formed the closest associations with the English and have placed themselves under their control." In consequence of the many injuries heaped upon the French because of this alliance, "it is the duty of the Republic to pursue its enemies wherever they are to be found and in whatever place they carry on their hostile operations."⁹ By this means the Directory hoped to justify its actions and preserve the neutrality, if not the friendship, of the Porte, which was looked upon as essential to the success of the enterprise and for which French representatives at Constantinople had long been laboring.¹⁰

It had not occurred to the English, meanwhile, that their Gallic rivals might be harboring designs on the possession of Egypt. George Baldwin had often raised the cry of "wolf!" in vain. Secure in the feeling that the Ottoman Government would be able to care for its own, they took no thought of Egypt for themselves and could not impute such thoughts to others. There was now no English consul in Egypt; not even an English merchant was established there. The Levant Company had long since lost all interest in the country, and the East India Company was not sufficiently interested in its overland communications to take active steps to safeguard them. It required a war with France and a major attack by the French on Egypt to change the attitude of the British Government from one of neglect to one of active interest in the condition of Egypt.

The stroke authorized by the Directory was quickly executed. On May 19 a large French fleet sailed from Toulon convoying a vast array of transports bearing a veteran army of nearly 40,000 men. A corps of able young officers accompanied the expedition

⁸ See De Testa, *op. cit.*, I, 520 ff., 573.

⁹ De Testa, *op. cit.*, I, 536; Clement, Marquis de la Jonquière, *L'Expédition d'Égypte, 1798-1801* (4 vols., Paris, n. d.), I, 343-344. Cf. Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 362.

¹⁰ De Testa, *op. cit.*, I, 538.

and a large group of civil experts was taken along to survey the country to be occupied, to study its character, and to report on its value. The work was to be done thoroughly. The English, meanwhile, were at a loss to comprehend these proceedings. In spite of numerous significant signs and warnings from observers,¹¹ there was no thought among Government heads that the expedition was aimed at Egypt. Lord Nelson, who was sent into the Mediterranean to counteract French purposes, could scarcely hazard a guess as to the meaning of French plans. This enabled Napoleon to execute his first projects. Barely evading the English fleet, he seized and garrisoned Malta on the excuse that the act was to prevent the island's falling prey to Austria.¹²

Having sequestered the treasure of the Knights of St. John, the French fleet departed for Egypt and arrived without warning at Alexandria, only twenty-four hours after Nelson had quitted the place, assured that the French were bound elsewhere. Napoleon's arrival was so sudden and unexpected that the English transient in Egypt had no opportunity of escaping with their property. Baldwin was no longer there to give counsel to the distracted Egyptians. Leaving his affairs in the hands of the Venetian, Rosetti, he had departed for his native country on March 14.¹³ English goods still littered the markets in Cairo and ships from India were unloading at Suez. The French seized a large portion of an Indian mail containing some valuable secret papers which had just arrived at Alexandria, and an English vessel in the harbor barely escaped with the remainder as the French transports sailed in.

The landing of troops from the French vessels and the taking of Alexandria were quickly accomplished. Attention was then directed to the immediate purpose of the expedition, which was the building of a series of forts for the control of the passageway from Alexandria through Cairo to the head of the Red Sea. At Suez a French fleet was to be collected which might presently sail to inflict the long-meditated mortal blow on Britain in India.¹⁴

¹¹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, "Memoir Concerning Egypt and the Red Sea," by A. Dalrymple.

¹² De Testa, *op. cit.*, I, 517; J. J. E. Roy, *Les Français en Égypte, ou Souvenirs des Campagnes d'Égypte et la Syrie, par un Officier de l'Expédition* . . . (Tours, 1855), pp. 19-21.

¹³ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, despatch of 3 Mar., 1798; Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 368; D. A. Cameron, *Egypt in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1898), pp. 217-218; William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain, from the Declaration of War by France in 1792, to the Accession of George IV* (New ed., 6 vols., London, 1886), II, 169-175.

¹⁴ J. F. Miot, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Expéditions en Égypte et en Syrie* (Paris, 1804). The account of the invasion is given at length by La Jonquière, in *L'Expédition d'Égypte*.

While Egypt was being subdued and fortifications were being constructed, French engineers ran a line of levels between the Mediterranean and Red Seas in order to ascertain whether it were possible to construct a sea-level ship canal. The results of this survey were not at all encouraging, not so much because of the impediments found as because of an apparent difference of thirty-two and a half feet in the levels of the two seas.¹⁵ The report of this survey effectually ended for the time all projects for a ship canal between the two seas.

Meanwhile, French designs on India had been checked in more serious ways. In April, 1798 — three months before Bonaparte's landing in Egypt — Sir John Shore had been succeeded as Governor-General in India by Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington. Wellesley was already aware of the critical nature of affairs in India and he acted promptly and vigorously to create a margin of safety. His apprehension of French agents and his summary demands of Indian princes that they discharge French officers and disband their armies ended the immediate danger of a general uprising in India and went far toward restoring fallen prestige. To these decisive measures was added the influence of a great naval victory in Egyptian waters.

Bonaparte had found both the outer and inner harbors at Alexandria too shallow and intricate to accommodate his powerful navy in safety. While his transports discharged their living freight at Alexandria, therefore, the high seas fleet was sent off to anchor in a protected position at Aboukir Bay, proximate to one of the mouths of the Nile. Here the French fleet was at last discovered by Lord Nelson, after a long and heart-breaking search, on August 1, and battle was immediately joined, with the French fleet still at anchor. By the morning of August 2, the French fleet, although potentially stronger, perhaps, than that of the English, was almost entirely destroyed or captured. It was a timely and peculiarly decisive action.¹⁶ The French army, although undefeated, was marooned.

¹⁵ *Description de l'Égypte, ou Recueil des Observations et des Recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte, pendant l'Expédition de l'Armée française, publié par les Ordres de Napoléon le Grand* (10 vols., Paris, 1809-1822), I, 57-58; De Testa, *op. cit.*, II, 82-85. The difference in levels reported by the French surveyors had a very considerable effect on the later development of routes to India. The reputation of these engineers for accuracy was such that their findings were everywhere accepted as authoritative until definitely disproved by surveyors in the employ of Ferdinand de Lesseps much later. De Lesseps himself seems to have been inspired by surveys of the Isthmus made about 1830 which were not highly credited at the time. See F. R. Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, p. 11; *Parliamentary Paper*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., p. 2.

¹⁶ James, *op. cit.*, II, 215; Hansard, *The Parliamentary History of England*

Although deprived of the possibility of receiving supplies and reinforcements from France, Bonaparte continued his military operations in Egypt, giving rise to the thought that he still hoped to reach India by way of the Red Sea. Nelson therefore took measures to apprise the Indian Presidencies of French designs as quickly as possible that they might be on guard.¹⁷ On August 10 he commissioned Lieut. Thomas Duval to proceed to India with despatches by what was frequently termed at that period the overland route. Lieut. Duval sailed in a native boat from Egypt to Alexandretta where he was welcomed by the Turkish authorities. Procuring an Arab costume, he continued by way of Aleppo to Bagdad. The Pasha of Bagdad, pleased by the news of the victory of the Nile, heaped honors on him, and furnished him with a boat which conveyed him to Basrah. Here, after a brief delay, he was able to take passage on an English packet vessel, and on October 21 he arrived at Bombay, having completed the journey, including stops, in about seventy days.¹⁸ From this time forward for a number of years despatches were sent to and from India by way of a line through Syria and Mesopotamia or through Arabia to the Persian Gulf. The other overland route through Egypt was not extensively used again until the advent of steam navigation.¹⁹

Even the route through Syria was placed in jeopardy by the French as soon as the conquest of Egypt had been completed. Although his friendly sentiments toward Mohammedans in general and the Ottoman Porte in particular had been reiterated, Bonaparte had been unable to preserve the neutrality of the Turks and he was compelled to face their open hostility. Under these circumstances a plan presented itself which apparently had not been thought of when the expeditionary force departed from France.²⁰ This was no less than to use Egypt as a base of operations for invading Syria and seizing the ports garrisoned by the Turks, and to march thence overland to India, relying on the friendship of the restive Arabs and Persians for assistance against

(London, 1819), XXXIII, 1527; Charles Norry, *An Account of the French Expedition to Egypt* . . . (Trans. from the French: London, 1800), pp. 10-12. Norry was an eye-witness of the battle. Lord Nelson received, among other rewards for this victory, a gift of £10,000 from the East India Company, "with a proper sense of the benefit they derived from the Nile victory."

¹⁷ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, "Extract of Letter from the Governor in Council at Bombay to the Governor-General in Council," 16 Nov., 1798.

¹⁸ James, *op. cit.*, II, 206, 465-466.

¹⁹ E. B. Barker, *Syria and Egypt under the Last Five Sultans of Turkey* (2 vols., London, 1876), I, 55.

²⁰ De Testa, *op. cit.*, I, 546-548, 564, 567, 572-575; Chares-Roux, *L'Angleterre*, etc., p. 363.

the English. The move was rash, but it was undertaken. The Syrian campaign was in many respects brilliant, but it ended in complete failure. An English fleet prevented the occupation of important Syrian ports, Turkish armies loomed up on the north and threatened an invasion of Egypt in the rear, while the French were not equipped for long marches through the unknown semi-arid regions eastward. Defeat was written in the retreat to Egypt, as the hasty return of Bonaparte to France bore witness.²¹

Even with its commander in France and without a supporting fleet, an undefeated French army in Egypt was a potential danger. So thought Sir Sidney Smith, when he arranged the Convention of El Arish between the Ottoman Government and General Kléber, in charge of the French army, providing for the peaceful evacuation of Egypt by the French, arms and all. This arrangement, however, was disavowed by the British Ministry, and as Egypt had by this time come to be considered vital to the safety of India, "the corner-stone of the Empire," an Egyptian campaign became necessary.²²

Already the Bombay Government had sent an armed force to establish military bases at the mouth of the Red Sea to obstruct any possible move of the French toward India by that route. A base was first prepared on the island of Perim, but because of the unhealthy environment this proved to be a death trap for the East India Company's troops. Within a few months the survivors were transferred to Aden on the Arabian coast, though the Government of India considered it unwise to make more than temporary use of the position.²³ In 1801 a combined military and naval force came out from India to coöperate with English forces which approached from the Mediterranean. Indian troops, landing at various points along the coast of Upper Egypt, moved down the Nile Valley with Cairo as their objective. But before these forces under Gen. Sir David Baird could effectively employ their strength, English contingents under Gen. Sir Ralph Abercromby had taken Cairo in June and Alexandria in September.²⁴

²¹ General Henri G., Comte Bertrand, *Campagnes d'Égypte et de Syrie* (2 vols., Paris, 1847), II; Hansard, *Parl. Hist.*, XXXIV, 1159; Miot, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-136; *The French Expedition into Syria, Comprising General Buonaparte's Letters, etc.*, (2d ed., London, 1799).

²² Hansard, *Parl. Hist.*, XXXV, 214-216, 587-598, 1436-1444; De Testa, *op. cit.*, II, 7-15.

²³ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6. This position was destined to come under the British flag a generation later, and to remain one of the principal stations on the route between England and India traversing the Red Sea.

²⁴ James, *op. cit.*, III, 81-95; C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, I, 218, 219; Sir Robert T. Wilson, *History of the British Expedition to Egypt* (London, 1803), pp. 166 ff.; "Journal of the English Expedition from India to Egypt," in *The Oriental Herald*, XV, 235-248; De Testa, *op. cit.*, II, 31-42.

These events and the Peace of Amiens brought to ruin the first French attempt to reach India in force by one of the shorter routes.

The sequel is not so dramatic, but is of some significance. After the disappearance of the French from Egypt, the relations between the British forces on the one hand and the Egyptians on the other soon became strained. The English ideal of a semi-independent Egypt ruled by the Beys was hotly opposed at Constantinople, where it was hoped that Turkish control of Egypt might be greatly increased as a result of the late troubles. The upshot of these bickerings was the rise of a new Turkish champion in the form of a young Albanian adventurer, Mehemet Ali. His allegiance fluctuated as interest dictated. Thus he advanced from post to post until in July, 1805, he was strong enough to obtain his appointment as Pasha of Egypt. The English had already evacuated Egypt in 1803, leaving their affairs in the hands of a new "British Proconsul," Samuel Briggs.²⁵ Being thus disengaged, Mehemet Ali proceeded to indulge in an orgy of slaughter in which he crushed the power of the Mamelukes, and was then free to disclose his friendly sentiments for the French, whom he warmly admired.²⁶

These events appeared to open Egypt to French influence anew. Even in defeat, Bonaparte had not given up his plans for making at least a feint at India by employing the route through Egypt. In 1802, he had sent Colonel Sébastiani on a tour of inspection to Egypt, and upon his return to France, prepared a memoir in which he stated his belief that a force of 6000 French might take Egypt, even against the English. This, published in the *Moniteur* in 1803, considerably revived French hopes of a successful stroke in India, and prompted the sending out of General Decaen to maintain the hopes of Indian rulers in the coming of a French army of relief.²⁷

The opening of a new Anglo-French conflict in the East occurred not in Egypt but at Constantinople. As the Napoleonic wars progressed and the Continental System was instituted, Russia was inevitably drawn into the European struggle. The approach of a Russian campaign opened for the French the diplomatic road to Constantinople, where the Turks were thirsting for re-

²⁵ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6. Rosetti reported from Cairo, July 25, 1801, that, although he had suffered severely from the French, who knew him to be an English agent, he had not heard from London for three years.

²⁶ Édouard Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon* (1807-1814) (Cairo, 1925), pp. iii, iv.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. vi, vii; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 370; De Testa, *op. cit.*, I, 504-511.

venge for the various inroads on Black Sea territories. In 1806, the astute Sébastiani was sent as French Ambassador to the Porte, taking with him a corps of French officers and diplomats. The English attack which this invited occurred in February, 1807, when a fleet under Admiral Duckworth undertook to penetrate the Dardanelles. This was successfully accomplished, and the way was opened to the Golden Horn. However, Sébastiani was equal to the situation. Working in feverish haste, he and his assistants were able to put the city in such a state of defence and to instil such spirit into the Turks, that the English had to retire discomfited.²⁸

Yet a worse experience awaited in Egypt. Hoping to regain the loss of prestige suffered before Constantinople, it was determined to make an immediate attack on Egypt, where the French were suspected of intending to land another army intent on the invasion of India. The cordial relations existing between the Egyptian dictator, Mehemet Ali, and the French Empire added a probability of French success altogether lacking in the expedition of 1798. But on this occasion, the English paid a dear price for having failed to keep closely in touch with the situation in Egypt. Instead of finding Egypt torn with the feuds of rival chieftains, they found it a strong centralized monarchy, with the Mamelukes cowed and almost powerless. The English forces under Generals Wauchope and Meade landed, were outmanœuvred at Rosetta, ignominiously defeated, and either captured or driven to their ships. The route through Egypt was decisively closed to the British for the time being.²⁹

In spite of these disasters to English arms, there was still room for consolation. If they were denied the control of Egypt and the use of the Red Sea route to India, the French, since the Battle of the Nile and particularly since Trafalgar, were denied the use of the Mediterranean. The island of Malta, retained by the British in defiance of the Peace of Amiens, was not yet a way station on routes of eastern communication, but it served admirably as a naval base, while Gibraltar gave assurance of access to the Mediterranean at all times. Thus, in the contest for mastery of the East, it was check and counter-check. It was a question of the primacy of land or of water domination. The monarch of the land — sovereign of France, master of Spain and Italy, ally

²⁸ Édouard Driault, *La Politique Orientale de Napoléon, Sébastiani et Gardane* (Paris, 1904), pp. 89-110; Driault, *La Question d'Orient, depuis ses Origines jusqu'à Nos Jours* (Paris, 1909), p. 85.

²⁹ Driault, *Mohamed Aly*, pp. viii, 1; *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 111-122; Félix Mengin, *Histoire de l'Égypte sous le Gouvernement de Mohammed-Aly* (2 vols., Paris, 1823), I, 282-300.

of Turkey and sponsor of Egypt, controller of nearly the whole shore of the Mediterranean — was unable to place a large force in Asia because of land distance and lack of control of intervening water routes, while the mistress of the seas was unable adequately to protect the approaches to India because of diplomatic and political barriers.

Obviously, the more practicable route for an army of conquest in the East was that by way of Egypt, and during his day in power Napoleon never abandoned the idea of making use of it. Time after time he projected attempts to place a French army in Egypt, only to be balked by English watchfulness or crises in Europe. In July, 1810, he went so far as to issue a decree for the construction of a fleet of transports on the Mediterranean. During the next two years he worked actively on the idea, collecting detailed information and making naval preparations. "If in 1812 the circumstances are favorable," he said, "I count on making an expedition to Sicily or to Egypt in the Mediterranean. . . . It is necessary to have at Toulon all that is necessary for an expedition to Egypt." And Corfu was made into a French arsenal to rival Malta.³⁰ Another Battle of the Nile was not unthinkable.

But all these careful plans miscarried. First, Mehemet Ali displayed signs of waning enthusiasm for the French cause as their armaments increased and his own territorial ambitions waxed. It was by no means certain that his extensive work on the fortifications at Alexandria were intended to guard the rear of a French movement from Egypt toward India.³¹ This the French were never to learn. The Russian campaign of 1812 proved to be a boomerang, and the disintegration of his elaborate European political structure in 1813 and 1814 brought an end to Napoleon's hopes of conquest in the Orient. Mehemet Ali, having completed his rise to power in Egypt by the extermination of the remaining Mamelukes in 1811, was left to pursue his own plans of conquest in Asia by which he became master of Arabia and, years later, Syria.³²

Not all of French plans during these years for an invasion of India were devoted to the route through Egypt. Careful consideration from the time of the Convention was given to the possible ways in which a land power might penetrate the East

³⁰ Driault, *Mehemet Aly*, p. xxv; Waldemar Ekedahl, "The Principal Causes of the Renewal of the War between England and France in 1803," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Ser., VIII, 181-202.

³¹ Driault, *Mehemet Aly*, pp. xxviii, 120-121, *passim*. St. Marcel, special French agent in Egypt and Syria, reported in May, 1811, that he was convinced that Mehemet Ali desired an alliance with the English.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. xxx-xxxix, 122-216, *passim*; D. G. Hogarth, *The Penetration of Arabia* (N. Y., 1904), pp. 84-89, 100-106, *passim*.

without being dependent on a vulnerable line of sea communications. Much preparatory work, especially of a diplomatic character, was found to be a prerequisite to any scheme for aggrandizement in Asia. The Turks, if they refused to become allies, must in any event be kept neutral. Coöperation was necessary from the semi-independent chieftains of western Asia. Hence, French agents under the Republic circulated freely in Syria, Mesopotamia, and even in Arabia. From the establishment of the Consulate in 1801 until near the end of the Empire, Napoleon kept his emissaries busy in the East collecting data and attempting to undermine British prestige in these countries.³³ He did not propose to fight his way toward India another time.

These moves were met by the insertion of diplomatic wedges by the British. As early as 1756 it had been proposed to appoint a permanent British agent at Bagdad, in view of French interest in the Levant. The idea was disapproved by the Court of Directors at that time, but a native agent was appointed in 1783. In 1798, a year ever memorable because of the French expedition to Egypt, an English delegation under Mr. Harford Jones (later Sir Harford Jones Brydges) was sent to Bagdad with the double object of arranging with the Pasha for the regular transmission of official despatches through his province and to observe and counteract the work of French agents who were active in the region at that time. Although Jones was not recognized by the Turkish authorities as having any particular powers, he was permitted to remain at Bagdad in the capacity of Political Agent of the East India Company pending his investment with more definite functions.³⁴ In 1802 Lord Elgin, then British Ambassador at the Porte, was able to secure a consular *barat* for the Resident at Bagdad to avoid possible misunderstandings in future.³⁵

On the rupture between England and Turkey in 1807, the Pasha of Bagdad took the Residents at Bagdad and Basrah under his protection, and they retained their positions. In 1810 the Residency at Basrah, which had been established as a consulate in 1764,³⁶ was amalgamated with that at Bagdad. The Resident thereafter bore the title of "Political Agent in Turkish Arabia," and because of his proximity to the Persian frontier he was expected to keep an eye on developments in that country as well.

³³ *Quarterly Review*, XXVI, 445.

³⁴ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Vol. 6, Loose Papers, Packet 11, Bundle 1, Nos. 7, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 16; C. U. Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sunnuds relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (8 vols., Calcutta, 1876-1878), III, 1-4; VII, Pt. I, 8, 9.

³⁶ An English factory had been established at Basrah before 1640. Various political privileges had been accorded the agents here before the establishment of the consulate.

This office was considered a very important one, partly because of its relationship to any line of communication to India through Mesopotamia, and partly because the Pasha of Bagdad was, to all intents and purposes, an independent chieftain. Many of the Arabs under his jurisdiction wandered at will across the Turco-Persian boundary, recognizing the authority neither of the Sultan nor of the Shah. The Resident at Bagdad was, therefore, usually a man of wisdom, courage and experience, and many illustrious names are connected with that position. Until 1835 these agents were responsible to the Bombay Government; but in that year their supervision was transferred to the Supreme Government at Calcutta.

In the south of Arabia the beginnings of diplomatic contacts had been made in connection with the sending of a naval force from India to Egypt in 1799. The expedition which found the island of Perim untenable, moved for a time to Aden on the Arabian mainland, where they were well received. The Sultan of Lahej, who controlled Aden, even proposed a treaty of alliance, but this was refused by the Admiral, Sir Home Popham, who did, however, promise aid to the Arabs in case of any attack from the French. On this basis a Treaty of Friendship was drawn up in 1802.³⁷ This was merely a precautionary measure at the time, for the permanent connection of the English with Aden dates from the establishment of a line of steam navigation between Suez and Bombay a generation later.

At other places along the Arabian coast diplomatic penetration began, to be consolidated at later intervals during the century. The native agent of the Company at Bushire negotiated the first treaty with the Imam of the Muscat Arabs in 1798, providing for the expulsion of French agents. Another and supplementary treaty was signed in 1800 at the instance of John Malcolm. This influence was interrupted by French agents in 1807, but was reestablished in 1810.³⁸ Other series of engagements were formed about the same time with the semi-nomadic Arabs on both sides of the Persian Gulf, most of which were of short duration.³⁹

After the creation of the French Empire, Napoleon had capable agents at work everywhere in Turkey bribing provincial governors, subsidizing ministers, and approaching the Sultan with alluring promises or subtle threats. Great Britain, on the other

³⁷ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Political Letter from Bombay, 22 Dec., 1801; Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 121-134.

³⁸ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, Pt. II, *passim*.

³⁹ Low, *op. cit.*, I, Ch. 10.

hand, had little to offer except promises of assistance in case of attack; but French insinuations frequently caused the Turks to wonder whether a French alliance would not be preferable to English domination. At the time of the formidable Gardane mission to Persia, the French Ambassador at the Porte, Sébastiani, as has been mentioned, succeeded in effecting a temporary breach between Turkey and Britain, the former being induced to enter the "Continental System." With the addition of Turkey to his list of allies, Napoleon had a clear road from the shores of Syria to the Punjab for his contemplated Indian enterprise. But this situation did not endure. Even before Sir Harford Jones had completed the negotiation of the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with Persia (March 12, 1809), articles of peace between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire were signed at the Dardanelles on January 5, 1809.⁴⁰ By this agreement, the old Capitulations were re-affirmed and England was granted most-favored-nation treatment. Following this, largely because of the danger from Russia, British diplomacy resumed its sway at the Porte and was not seriously endangered for a considerable span of years. This went far toward closing the gate, left open for a space of two years, by which a European power might have entered Asia intent on reaching India.

Out of these precautions taken against France grew a line of regular communication between England and India, now that the route through Egypt could no longer be relied on. In 1802 Lord Elgin was sent to Constantinople as Ambassador to the Porte with special instructions to make definite provision for the frequent and safe transmission of despatches through Turkish dominions, in Europe as well as in Asia. His efforts were crowned with success. "Nothing can exceed the regularity and zeal which your agents at Bagdad, Bussorah, and Aleppo uniformly exhibit," he wrote the Court of Directors of the East India Company. "They have left me nothing to do eastward further than showing occasional attentions and sending trifling presents to the Governor of their residencies. . ."⁴¹ From Constantinople the new route continued overland through the Turkish Balkan provinces by *estafette* or relays of Turkish couriers *via* Bucharest to Vienna. From there other couriers carried the packets through Germany to the North Sea, whence they were conveyed to England. "During my Embassy," wrote

⁴⁰ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, App. I, iii-xxiv; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 364-370, *passim*.

⁴¹ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, 12 Feb., 1802.

Elgin in 1806, "a Tatar was expedited eastward once a fortnight as regularly as the Post came in from Vienna. For the most part this Tatar took nothing except the European newspapers and my letters to the Government in India. . ."⁴² By this route, which closely approximated the line which made the Bagdad Railway famous—and dangerous—a century later, communications were carried on until after the close of the Napoleonic Wars. Strangely enough, the European overland section of this line proved to be much more difficult than that in Asia. This was due to the frequent uprisings of the Balkan subjects of the Sultan, the hordes of brigands, and the constant tampering with the mails by officials of the various countries through which the line passed.⁴³ Despatches sent by this line were generally of the utmost importance and secrecy, and the English public never became aware of the extent to which the line was used.

Motives similar to those which led to the beginnings of diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire also suggested bringing other states into line. In 1808 Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, later Governor of the Bombay Presidency, concluded a treaty of alliance with Shah Shujah of the Dooranee (Afghan) Empire with the object of preventing the threatened invasion of Afghanistan and India from the west. This treaty, which was ratified by Lord Minto on June, 17, 1809, guaranteed assistance to Shah Shujah only in case of a joint attack by French and Persians.⁴⁴

Diplomatic overtures were likewise made to Persia. This country offered a good field for diplomatic operations early in the nineteenth century, not only because it laid claim to lower Mesopotamia and lay athwart some of the lines of access to India, but also because of its receptive attitude toward western advances. Ordinarily averse from European influences, the Persian Court was then desperately eager to establish cordial relations with any state which might assist in checking dismemberment by Russia.

The English, suspicious of the designs of both France and Russia, were the first to appear on the scene in diplomatic force. In December, 1799, while excitement still ran high throughout the British world over the invasion of Egypt, a formidable embassy headed by Captain John Malcolm left Bombay for the Persian Gulf, *en route* to Teheran. The mission had several objects connected with the safety and the trade of India, but the

⁴² *Ibid.*, Elgin to the East India Company, 11 Aug., 1806.

⁴³ I. O. Records, *ut supra*, Nos. 2, 10; Barker, *op. cit.*, I, 55, 96.

⁴⁴ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, II, 424.

chief one was the desire "to counteract the possible attempts of those villanous but active democrats, the French."⁴⁵ Persia at that time was virgin soil in the diplomatic sense, and there was considerable doubt in the minds of the envoys what attitude and what course to pursue to avoid wounding oriental susceptibilities on the one hand while maintaining British prestige on the other. After some preliminary sparring with Persian officials at Bushire, Malcolm concluded that the two great essentials in dealing with the Persians lay in the munificent distribution of presents and in stickling for forms. Both of these points contributed to vexatious delays, the Persian officials bargaining for all the tips which the situation would bear while they grudgingly gave the required formal and somewhat ostentatious reception.

Nevertheless, Malcolm was well received at Teheran, partly because of the very prodigality of his gifts, which were in proportion to the estimated gravity of the situation. At the same time, he found that the effect of French successes in Europe and of Bonaparte's daring plunge into Egypt was working its magic in Persia. He wrote to a friend, ". . . the nature of my situation requires me to be very cautious. . . Those rascals, the French, will persuade the Turks that they are their best friends before they have done; and if they succeed in establishing themselves in Egypt on any terms, we must look to every quarter, and to none with more care than to the Persian Gulf."⁴⁶

Although Malcolm was received by the Shah with marks of consideration, his work moved slowly forward because he undertook to bribe every one into acquiescence. At last, however, political and commercial treaties were drawn up and agreed to which appeared to be all that Britain could ask. The Persians were to assist in protecting the northwest frontier of India in return for British assistance in case of attack on Persia; there were strong provisions for the expulsion and "extirpation" of French subjects in Persia, and British merchants were granted extensive trading privileges.⁴⁷ These treaties were never formally ratified on either side, but firmans were issued by the Shah and like orders by the Governor-General of India declaring them to be in force.

Having thus apparently succeeded in its main objects, the British Embassy prepared to return to India. Malcolm carefully avoided giving any explicit guarantees that British aid would be forthcoming in the struggle against Russia. Vague assurances

⁴⁵ Malcolm's instructions are given in J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm*. . . (2 vols., London, 1856), I, 30, 89.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 128.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 515-525; *Hertslet's Commercial Treaties*, VIII, 659-662. Cf. Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia* (2 vols., London, 1921), II, 398-399.

were given, however, that Great Britain would naturally not permit her Persian ally to be despoiled, and with these veiled promises, on which any Persian support and coöperation depended, the British delegation withdrew to India.

For more than two years thereafter, the Russians steadily continued their attacks, while the Persian Government appealed to Britain for help in vain. The French meanwhile kept in touch with the Persian situation through their efficient network of consuls, merchants, and spies, and waited for an opportune moment to serve their cause.⁴⁸ In 1805 a formal Persian mission reached Calcutta hoping to arrange for active assistance on the basis of earlier promises. Although the Indian Government maintained rather frequent communications with Great Britain by the then overland route, considerable procrastination ensued. So as weeks passed with no sign of favorable action either in India or in England, Feth Ali Shah, "considering the effect on the Orient of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt," felt obliged to seek French aid.⁴⁹

War had already broken out between France and Russia, placing Persia in a very strategic position, and greatly increasing the significance attached by Persia to French promises. Immediately upon receiving word concerning the Persian change of heart, Napoleon despatched two agents to make hasty preliminary investigations, before committing himself wholly to any line of conduct. One of these, M. Amedée Jaubert, was sent out primarily with a view to opening negotiations for an alliance with the Sultan. This came to an end so summarily — due to British dominance at the Porte — that it nearly involved France and Turkey in hostilities. Quitting Constantinople, Jaubert made his way under an assumed name toward Persia. He had been preceded, however, by another diplomatic agent, M. Romieu, who, with his secretary, managed to reach Persia, having with difficulty passed through Asiatic Turkey in disguise. Their disguise had not been so perfect as to deceive the English consul at Aleppo, John Barker,⁵⁰ who immediately reported his discovery to Harford Jones, British consular agent at Bagdad. The latter's watchfulness and his influence in Mesopotamia nearly brought an untimely end to the French mission.

⁴⁸ Le Cte. Alfred de Gardane, *Mission du Général Gardane en Perse, sous le Premier Empire. Documents historiques*. . . (Paris, 1865), pp. 9, 10; Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon*, pp. 91-92, 119; Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, 396.

⁴⁹ Gardane, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 40, 399-401.

⁵⁰ Gardane, *op. cit.*, p. 18. Barker was a stern enemy of all French activities. As English consul in Syria and in Egypt for the next third of a century he had many opportunities to check French enterprise and to promote speedy communications between India and the mother country for political reasons.

Romieu was well received at the Persian capital, and he, like Jaubert, who arrived in 1806, reported very favorably on the opportunity for the extension of French interests since Feth Ali desired an alliance with France. This attitude of the Persian Court was carefully fostered by French agents during 1806 and the early months of 1807, until Napoleon, having mastered central Europe, could devote more attention to his oriental plans. In February, 1807, the Russian Government offered favorable terms of peace to Persia, which, in view of French promises of assistance, were refused. A Persian envoy was thereupon sent with all haste to conclude a formal alliance with Napoleon before a short truce with Russia should expire. The Persian envoy found Napoleon in camp at Finkenstein, where he was courteously received and asked to await the drawing up of a treaty.⁵¹

Before this draft was ready, Napoleon had responded to the invitation to open diplomatic relations with Persia. He determined at the outset to impress the oriental mind with a suggestion of illimitable power, and to this end he selected a formidable delegation of seventy picked men to undertake a kind of pioneering mission. The ground was to be prepared for a possible Franco-Persian invasion of India, hence various treaties were to be drafted and surveys of many kinds carried out. Napoleon's instructions to General Gardane, the head of the mission, go far toward explaining why British attitude toward the states of western Asia suddenly underwent a change. These ran, in part:

Persia is today squeezed in between Russia and the English possessions. The nearer these possessions approach the Persian frontier, the more she [Persia] must fear the eventual aggrandizement of them: she will be in danger of becoming some day, as northern India, an English province, if from now on she does not anticipate the danger, to injure England, and to aid against her all the operations of the French. . .

Persia is considered by France from two points of view: as the natural enemy of Russia and as a means of passage for an expedition to India. . .

Let us suppose . . . that the French expedition, with the consent of the Porte, should land at Alexandretta, or that it should round the Cape of Good Hope and land at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. . . It must be known in both cases what would be the route from the landing place to India. . .

⁵¹ Gardane, pp. 19-25; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 172-177.

In fine, General Gardane must not lose sight of the fact that our important task is to establish a triple alliance between France, the Porte, and Persia, to open for us a road to India and to procure for us help against Russia. . .⁵²

Gardane and his party having been despatched for the East with important duties and extensive powers, Napoleon proceeded to complete the treaty of alliance with Persia. This, the Treaty of Finkenstein, was concluded on May 30, 1807, and is a monument to the self-interest of the Emperor of the French. According to this document, Persia was to declare war on England immediately, to expel all the English from the country and allow none to enter again, to unite with the Afghans, Mahrattas, and other Indian peoples for a march on English Indian holdings, and in every way to assist a French army to march through the country in case of a French expedition against the English in India. The obligations of Persia were stated precisely, inclusively, and in considerable detail. The obligations of France, on the other hand, were vaguely worded and stated only in brief, general terms. In substance, France recognized the validity of Persia's claim to Georgia, which had been annexed by Russia in 1800, and undertook to supply as many cannon, rifles, officers, and workmen as Persia should need in maintaining her territorial integrity.⁵³

The Treaty of Finkenstein had hardly been completed and a copy despatched for the approval of the Shah when events in Europe altered its whole bearing. In June, 1807, occurred the decisive battle of Friedland, in which the Russians were routed. Tsar Alexander thereupon sued for peace, and negotiations were conducted by the two Emperors in person at Tilsit. According to the arrangements adopted at this important conference, Napoleon was to have a free hand, so to speak, in Europe, and Alexander like privileges in Asia. Both were to consider Britain their chief enemy.⁵⁴ This was a natural and almost inevitable arrangement, based on the natural spheres of interest of the two powers. Thus, Napoleon sacrificed Asiatic connections for European policy, undermined his connections with Persia since he could

⁵² Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 183, 184; Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-25, 82-94. Gardane was chosen to head the mission because he was well known in the commercial ports of the Levant and in Persia, where members of his family had long held consular positions.

⁵³ The Treaty is given in Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-81. See Édouard Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 170-173; Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 402-405.

⁵⁴ A. Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre I^{er}* (3 vols., Paris, 1891-1896), I, Appendix; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 197-214.

no longer assist against Russia, and thereafter used Persia as a pawn to keep Britain at bay as long as possible. These events, however, were not known and understood in Persia for many months.⁶⁵

Gardane proceeded to act on his instructions at first in ignorance of and later without regard to the Treaty of Tilsit. He was kept very poorly informed of developments in Europe, probably for good reason. He negotiated a favorable commercial treaty, prepared maps, supervised surveys, survived many delicate diplomatic difficulties, and invented most ingenious excuses to explain the non-arrival of arms, munitions, and training officers from France at a time when he was as ignorant as the Persians themselves as to the causes of the non-execution of French engagements.⁶⁶ Thus the year 1807 passed and 1808 dragged along with Persia and Russia still at odds. The instructions which reached Gardane at long intervals indicated a changed attitude on the part of the Emperor — one which encouraged the conclusion of a Russo-Persian peace on the basis of Persian concessions. However, England was still pictured to the Persian Court as the universal enemy and Napoleonic France as the champion of justice.⁶⁷

Gardane, meanwhile, retained faith in the genuineness of the Franco-Persian alliance. He supported the Persian Government in refusing to make terms with Russia on the basis of the cession to the latter of the provinces of Georgia, Erivan, and the Trois Églises. He even believed that the demands made on several occasions by the Russian field commander, General Goudowitsch, that the Persian Government treat with him directly, were unauthorized by the Russian Government and contrary to the wishes of the Emperor Napoleon. On October 12, Gardane wrote General Goudowitsch that if certain confidential representations he had previously made, to the effect that the Russo-Persian boundary difficulty would undoubtedly be settled in Paris, were flouted by the Russian high command, "it is my duty officially to announce to you that Persia, being allied with the Emperor [Napoleon], and the integrity of the territory your troops are occupying having been guaranteed by the Emperor, I shall regard all attacks against this territory as a provocation against my august court."⁶⁸ This

⁶⁵ Napoleon undoubtedly considered this arrangement, by which Russia entered his "Continental System" against Britain, as a convenient substitute for his projected invasion of India. Gardane stated positively to the Shah in February, 1808, that nothing had been stipulated at Tilsit relative to Persia because the treaty of alliance (Finkenstein) had not then been ratified by Persia.

⁶⁶ Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-138.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 310-322.

⁶⁸ Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

threat Goudowitsch considered of such small importance that he ignored it altogether, aware, no doubt, that Gardane was being used as a dupe and that he himself was much better informed on conditions in Europe than was the chief of the French mission.

Hence, but a few months after Napoleon had regaled his ally, the Shah, with a glowing account of how the world was arming to avenge themselves on the English, Goudowitsch was brutally demanding "for the last time" the cession of choice Persian territories, with the simple justification that "the power which the Russian Government has acquired by force of arms gives it the right to those boundaries which it pleases to have." And he must needs taunt the Persians with their own helpless isolation and the fact that a hostile British force had arrived in the Persian Gulf to begin an offensive in which the Pasha of Bagdad threatened to take part.⁵⁹

These developments shocked and frightened the credulous Persians. Gardane was summoned before the Shah to explain Napoleon's strange neglect and to state whether the French could be relied upon for assistance. To this Gardane could only reply that in a situation so desperate for the Persians, he could not advise them to undertake a war on the two extremities of their Empire, but that if the English were admitted to Persia as friends he must needs sever French relations.⁶⁰ This he was presently compelled to do as the English made headway. By November, 1808, Gardane found his popularity and prestige gone. Without any reply from France in response to frantic appeals for instructions, he and his suite had no choice but to withdraw from Persia as an English embassy under Harford Jones approached Teheran from the Persian Gulf.⁶¹

With the withdrawal of Gardane vanished the last serious threat France was to make of invading India by land. There is, of course, no proof that Napoleon seriously contemplated making use of the road through Persia at any time, although his actions prior to the Treaty of Tilsit would seem to show such an intent.⁶² But after the British rupture with Turkey in 1807 and the confidential reports of French agents on conditions in Egypt, he inclined in favor of his original plan of attack, which was to

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-204; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 325-334.

⁶⁰ Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-244, *passim*; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, p. 323.

⁶¹ Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 336-339. Although beginning to fear that he might have been betrayed, Gardane retained a high regard of the importance of his mission to the last, and in his final communication to the Emperor from Persian soil he urged a quick invasion of India by the route he had surveyed.

⁶² Gardane, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34, 108; Driault, *La Question d'Orient*, pp. 94-95; *La Politique Orientale*, pp. 341-342.

proceed through Egypt. The cloak dropped in Persia by France was taken up by Russia, which Power, with much less pomp and fanfare but with infinitely more subtle scheming, patience, and purposefulness, more nearly succeeded in placing its armies on the southern slopes of the Himalayas than Napoleon probably could have, had all of his preparations been acted upon.

Although the Government of India had expressed alarm, the British Cabinet had been slow to comprehend the full meaning of the French mission in Persia where Malcolm had been so successful not long before. The complete breakdown of the French Egyptian enterprise had conduced to a temporary feeling of security as far as eastern matters were concerned. By the end of the year 1806, however, some anxiety was being manifested in London at the rapid growth of French influence at various points in Asia. This was considerably stimulated by a report made by Malcolm in November to the Governor-General of India, the substance of which was transmitted to the Home Government.

If the war between Russia and France [he said] has terminated in a manner favorable to the interests of the latter, . . . Turkey can only be considered hereafter as a province of the French Government, and under such circumstances, British India will be exposed to a danger which will require every measure of preventative policy to avert. . .

I have learnt from respectable authority that almost all the provinces of Turkey are already inundated with French officers, and when the war with Russia is over, it is evident that Bonaparte can spare any number of troops to aid in the support, or rather, restoration of the tottering power of the Ottomans. The probable first employment of such a force would be the reduction . . . of the most rebellious provinces of the [Turkish] Empire, among which may be numbered Egypt, Syria, and Bagdad; and if that service is ever effected by the aid of a French force, we must anticipate the actual establishment of the influence and power of that nation over countries subdued, which would give it an advanced and advantageous position from whence it could carry on intrigues and operations against the British power in India. . .⁶³

Similar reports from other quarters increased the disquietude. In consequence, upon the successful completion of the French

⁶³ Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, 395-398.

campaign against Russia in 1807, steps were immediately taken by the British to send a delegation to Persia, backed by a show of naval strength, to oust the French and renew English engagements.⁶⁴ The initiative in this was taken by the Government of India, which recommended to the Home Government and to the Court of Directors of the Company that Captain John Malcolm again be sent to Persia as special ambassador. The Home authorities did not countenance this suggestion, being mindful of Malcolm's unnecessary extravagance on his first mission. Instead, the choice fell on Harford Jones as one whose long experience in the East and whose natural caution would give him peculiar fitness for counteracting French influence and negotiating a new treaty with the Shah. Early in 1808, therefore, Jones and his staff, armed with suitable presents and rather general instructions set out from England for the Persian Gulf by way of the Cape of Good Hope and Bombay.⁶⁵

The renewal of British contacts with Persia was complicated by the fact that the Government of India, on behalf of the East India Company, though often acting on its own responsibility in the absence of definite instructions, assumed a considerable degree of responsibility for the political situation in those states lying near India. For both political and commercial reasons, the Indian Government was unwilling to have the British Government negotiate directly with these states, which would naturally have a tendency to dim the prestige which had grown up about the name of the Company as an autocratic, imperial authority in itself. In the Persian question, therefore, the Governor-General, Lord Minto, took the responsibility upon his own office to regain at the Persian Court the hegemony which had been usurped by the French. Finding the Home Government not disposed to act through the Company's agency on this occasion, Lord Minto conceived the idea of anticipating the Home authorities, who were notoriously slow in such matters, and thus increasing the Company's influence both in Asia and in England.⁶⁶

For this purpose, Malcolm was appointed a commissioner of the Government of India early in 1808, with powers of a general and not well defined character, and was instructed to hold himself in readiness to depart from India for Persian shores at any moment. He presently proceeded from Calcutta to the Persian Gulf by way of Bombay, which, because of its favorable bearing, was used as a base for all of the operations in Persia during this

⁶⁴ Hon. George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 576-577; Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, 397, 398, 413-426.

⁶⁵ Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, 401-402.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 410, 411.

period. Malcolm's ship *Psyche*, supported by a strong squadron, arrived at Bushire on May 10, and a Captain Pasley, who had previously spent several years in Persia as an informer, was deputed to proceed toward Teheran and arrange for Malcolm's reception at Court.

The French were still too strong at this time, however, and Malcolm was refused permission to come to the capital. At the same time the Shah and most of his ministers made no secret of their desire to learn what the English had to offer, and Malcolm was invited to treat with the Prince Regent of the province of Fars before any official reception was given him by the Persian Government. To this proposal Malcolm replied hotly that while a French Ambassador was given constant recognition at the Persian Court, a representative of the British Nation could never condescend to treat with a provincial chief; that further, unless he were permitted to state his mission at Teheran in the presence of the Shah, he would at once terminate his visit, embark for India, and never return to Persian soil unless accorded all the dignity and honor which had been given him on the occasion of his first mission.⁶⁷

For assuming this tone of hauteur, which he described as one of "temperate remonstrance and offended friendship," Malcolm has been severely criticised on several occasions.⁶⁸ His biographer, Kaye, even ascribes the failure of the mission to this attitude. It is possible, however, that it served the purpose intended. Malcolm could hardly have been admitted to Court as long as the Persian Government retained hope of receiving the promised aid from France, in any case. By his uncompromising demands and proud demeanor Malcolm believed that he had contributed much to the Persian distrust of French power of which signs were already appearing.

After having spent several weeks in fruitless negotiation and intrigue, Malcolm, "to the utter consternation of the populace," made good his threat to return to India.⁶⁹ The causes of his failure were reviewed at Calcutta and new plans put on foot to maintain the honor of Britain and the glory of the East India Company. One of these was a plan to seize and garrison the island of Karrack, lying close to the Persian shore. This island

⁶⁷ Kaye, *op. cit.*, 416-418.

⁶⁸ Indeed, Lord Minto himself was displeased at the arrogant speech used by Malcolm on this occasion.

⁶⁹ The mercantile class living along the shores of the Persian Gulf were generally strongly pro-British, chiefly because of the protection given by the Bombay Marine to their trading vessels. Besides, they were so far removed from Teheran as to have little sympathy with the policies and intrigues of the Court.

had been promised to France by the Treaty of Finkenstein; and as it had been considered as a suitable base for a Franco-Persian invasion of India, now it was proposed to employ it to offset the intrigues of French agents among the chiefs of lower Arabia and Persia and to thwart any attempts at the invasion of India. The commercial value of the island was not overlooked, nor the fact that it was so situated as to facilitate actual military operations in Persia should the French menace continue. Arrangements for an expedition to Karrack were well under way, when at the end of September, 1808, word arrived that Sir Harford Jones had actually arrived in the Persian Gulf preparatory to opening negotiations with the Shah.

In this dilemma, Lord Minto was compelled to proceed with caution. The expedition to Karrack was necessarily suspended, for, as he said, "We cannot commit hostilities on Persia while the King of England is negotiating with the King of Persia."⁷⁰ To save his *amour propre*, the Governor-General took the "sour-grapes" view that the island would not be particularly desirable, and that the French could hardly have used it, in any event. Malcolm was instructed to observe the progress of the imperial mission from the vantage point of Bombay and to bide his time. As soon as Sir Harford had accomplished the principal objects of his mission, including the formation of a preliminary treaty between Great Britain and Persia, Malcolm was despatched to Teheran at the head of a new mission to raise the fallen crest of the Government of India.⁷¹ At Bushire he received a cordial welcome, both from residents and from Persian officials who extended a polite and formal invitation for him to visit the capital. The English-Indian party made very leisurely progress toward the Persian capital, allowing ample time for the Court to prepare a suitable reception. The situation was full of unpleasant possibilities, however, for Malcolm insisted that he must be received by Sir Harford Jones as an equal and as the representative of a government whose interests in Persian welfare were second to none. At first this concession was refused by Sir Harford, who had received a number of "stinging" letters from the Governor-General since his arrival in Persia. Malcolm, thereupon, prepared to withdraw without approaching Teheran; but Sir Harford, rather than compromise his own position by an open break with Malcolm, who was personally very popular with the Persian Court, relented, and Malcolm and his entourage arrived in the presence of the Shah on June 21.⁷²

⁷⁰ Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, 437, 438.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I, 507-511, *passim*.

⁷² *Ibid.*, II, 1-22.

Thus, Britain was represented on Persian soil by two distinct and obviously rival missions, one coming from England intent on the undoing of France; and the other hailing from India to make provision for checking the further advance of Russia. Both had power to negotiate treaties. The Persian Court, already distracted by French promises and Russian threats, now found itself truly between the horns of a dilemma. Any offending of the British Ambassador would likely deprive Persia of military and diplomatic assistance in Europe, while the seizure of strategic positions along the Persian coast was probable if the Indian mission were not accorded due honor. The Persians temporized by officially acknowledging both delegations, and instead of playing the prejudices of one diplomatic envoy against the other, the way was made easy for a *rapprochement* between the two. After considerable sparring, Jones and Malcolm were able to arrange a *modus vivendi* much to their own credit and the relief of the Persians.

Although the prestige of the Indian Government undoubtedly was increased by Malcolm's third mission, his efforts otherwise were largely barren of results. In July, 1809, despatches from England announced the intention of the British Government to assume charge of all relations with Persia thereafter, thus greatly limiting the political sphere of the Company's operations and making of Malcolm's embassy an expensive gesture.⁷³ Sir Harford Jones retired in 1811, but until the close of the Napoleonic Wars the relations between Britain and Persia were direct and close.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, Persia was content to remain practically a ward of Great Britain. Some of the officers of the Indian political mission remained to train Persian troops and give technical advice and even to take active part in the struggle which still continued with Russia.

The preliminary treaty of peace and friendship negotiated by Sir Harford Jones in 1809 sufficed to define the relations between Britain and Persia meanwhile, and supplied the foundation for most of the subsequent engagements of the two states. Its concern for the protection of routes of access to India appeared in every article of the document. In fine, Persia was to make no engagements hostile to British interests and was expressly to prevent any European force from passing through Persia toward

⁷³ Malcolm was censured by the Bengal Government for his lavish expenditures, but he insisted that his mission could not have been carried out without them. Kaye writes, "I have always thought that this mission was unnecessary . . . it may be questioned whether the re-elevation of the fallen majesty of the Indian Government was worth the expenditure bestowed upon it." — *Ibid.*, II, 50.

⁷⁴ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 407.

India. In return, Great Britain gave pledges similar to those offered earlier by the French. Persia was to be protected against invasion from any quarter, was to be supplied with arms and military forces for defensive purposes, and was to be subsidized materially.⁷⁵

This agreement was made into a formal, definitive treaty, signed on November 25, 1814.⁷⁶ The provisions were largely the same as in the previous document, the main feature being the precaution against armies hostile to Great Britain which might march across Persia toward India. The Persian subsidy was here fixed at £150,000, and was to continue until Persia engaged in an aggressive war.⁷⁷ By these measures, a substantial part of the land passage between eastern Europe and the frontiers of India was made safe for Great Britain until changing conditions and shifting alliances in Europe placed Anglo-Persian interests, and hence their policies, on a different basis.

Although political activity in the Near and Middle East declined considerably after the exile of Napoleon to St. Helena, the late events in Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia had done much to destroy British confidence in the adequacy of the Cape route to India. Englishmen had been loath to believe such reports as they heard during the latter part of the eighteenth century that the French were actually contemplating the conquest and occupation of Egypt largely because of the strategic value of that position, but the well planned expedition of 1798 and later persistent efforts on the part of both France and Russia to acquire control of one or another of the shorter routes by which the feet of clay of the British colossus might be shattered taught thorough lessons. These events ushered in a century in which the protection, development, and control of the approaches to India and other possessions in the East were to rank among the leading enterprises of the British people.

⁷⁵ *British and Foreign State Papers*, I, 258-261. Cf. Curzon, *op. cit.*, I, 576-7.

⁷⁶ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, I, 261-266; Victor Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, II, 199, 200, 419. The actual work of drawing up both treaties is ascribed by Fontanier to James Morier, one of Sir Harford Jones' suite and "a more clever man than his colleagues." See Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 407-409.

⁷⁷ By a subsequent arrangement this subsidy was paid to Russia in lieu of an indemnity imposed on Persia in 1813. Britain began to consider it quite as much to her own as to Persia's interests to prevent further Russian aggression southward. — Martens et Cussy, *Recueil des Traités*. . . (7 vols., Leipzig, 1846), II, 399.

CHAPTER IV

STEAM AND THE ALL-SEA ROUTE TO INDIA

UPON the return to England in 1594 of Captain James Lancaster's ship *Bonaventure*, freighted with the riches of plundered Portuguese and Arabian vessels, English interest quickly shifted from the Mediterranean to the newly tried channel to the Far East around the tip of Africa. Competition was keen and the dangers were many in the Mediterranean. Captain Lancaster's exploit supplied evidence that while the dangers of a long voyage to the lands opened up by the Portuguese were many times greater, the opportunities for great wealth from successful voyages were almost unlimited. The chartering of the East India Company on December 31, 1600, and the raising of an initial capital of £68,323, committed the leading merchants adventurers of the time to a new policy of trade with the East depending wholly on the passage around the Cape of Good Hope.¹

During the greater part of the next three centuries, the Cape route was employed without thought of the possibility of the development of other channels to India and the Far East either for trade or for communication. Even the activities of the French in Egypt and the occasional sending of special despatches through Syria to the Persian Gulf late in the eighteenth century detracted little from the feeling of reliance on the all-sea route, which had long since become a highway dominated by English ships and marked by English way stations. By the middle of the seventeenth century a special type of vessel had been devised for the India trade — the early East Indiaman. With the growth of seafaring experience and volume of trade, vessels of this type tended to increase in size, though not, as in the case of the Portuguese galleons, at the expense of navigability.² By 1700 some

¹ H. G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings in Western India, 1579-1657*, pp. 36-37.

² The vessels developed by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century became at last veritable floating fortresses, exceedingly clumsy and unmanageable, as were the Spanish war vessels at the time of the Great Armada. Portuguese galleons disappeared from the Indian seas for much the same reason as the Irish elk became extinct from the increasing weight of his once useful antlers.

of the largest were of nearly 500 tons burden, though during the the next three quarters of a century they grew little because of special obligations imposed by law on larger vessels. After the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the growth in size was rapid, and by 1800 the Company had several ships chartered for 1200 tons. By this time, "the East Indiamen were the largest, best built, and most powerfully armed vessels in the world, with the exception only of some warships."³

At the beginning of the seventeenth century there was little difference in construction between a ship of war and a merchantman. But within a century the exigencies of war on the high seas had contributed to the development of certain types of naval vessels, swift in speed and capable of carrying heavy armaments. The East Indiamen, because of the many dangers to which they were constantly exposed from recognized enemies and pirates, quite naturally came to display many similarities to the frigates of the Royal Navy. Inasmuch as the former were built less for speed and more for cargo carrying, they were somewhat slower in speed and deeper in draught than their naval contemporaries. The *Hope*, a typical Company's vessel of the better class at the beginning of the nineteenth century, measured 1480 tons, was 200 feet long and of 40-foot beam.⁴ Vessels of this type represent almost the highest form of sailing vessel ever developed. Only the clipper ship of the eighteen forties excelled in speed and seaworthiness, and these advantages were gained at the sacrifice of cargo-carrying capacity.

Indeed, the rigors of the Cape route to the East produced in the later East Indiamen noble vessels. Built of English oak, elm, and India teak, copper-fastened throughout, they were stanch and long-lived. For their day they were luxurious in appointments, providing comforts and luxuries for passengers and crew which were not dreamed of in the early days of the Company's activities. Until the nineteenth century was well advanced and the merchant marine of the Company was suffered to decline because of the loss of trading monopolies, no steamship could vie with the vessels of the East India fleet either in safety or comfort. It is little wonder that the early steamship made way with difficulty and that few officers either of the naval or merchant services were willing to serve on steam vessels during the first half of the nineteenth century.

All the comforts and the elements of safety devised for the

³ E. Keble Chatterton, *The Old East Indiamen* (London, 1914), p. 4.

⁴ James Wathen, *Journal of a Voyage to Madras and China in 1811 and 1812* (London, 1814), p. 5.

voyage to India, however, did little to shorten its duration. At the very least, many weeks were required from the time of the taking on of passengers at the ports of the Downs or at Portsmouth to the first landfall off the coast of Ceylon or southern India. As late as 1825, by which time the old East Indiamen were approaching their highest stage of development, from five to eight months were required to transmit messages from the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London to the Governor-General at Calcutta, and replies were frequently not received within a period of two years.⁵ Outfits of clothing for children making the passage had to take into consideration the probability of considerable growth between departure and arrival.⁶ Wars in Europe frequently were terminated and settlements made long before the fighting in India and adjacent waters, which reflected European rivalries, had ceased.

It is difficult nowadays to realize the many difficulties and problems of such long voyages, even with the accumulated experience of two centuries as guide. The food supply was not one of the least of these, when, as was often the case, the number of mouths of passengers, officers, and crew numbered two or three hundred. As salt and preserved foods would not suffice for so long a voyage, fresh food, as to meats, was carried alive. On one voyage the *Hope*, previously referred to, carried —

. . . One cow, 50 Southdown sheep, 71 porkers, and more than 600 geese, ducks, and fowls. The cow and sheep were conveniently lodged on deck, on the top of the spars, under a commodious awning, and the fowls in coops. The cow and sheep had an allowance of two hundred-weight of hay weekly, and a daily allowance of 15 gallons of fresh water.⁷

These were to feed a total complement of 384 souls as far as the Cape of Good Hope, where additional supplies could be had.

Such stores of fresh meat made the voyage possible, but scarcely more than tolerable. In cramped and congested quarters, surrounded by dangers from human enemies and in peril from the elements, even the experienced traveller might confess, "I could not help feeling considerable emotion, and some alarm, upon quitting my native shore upon so long and dangerous a voyage. . ."⁸ And the dangers were very real. There was always

⁵ *Parliamentary Paper*, 1834, No. 478, Appendix 6, p. 34.

⁶ [Thomas Twining], *Travels in India One Hundred Years Ago* (London, 1893), p. 2.

⁷ Wathen, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

the likelihood of outbreaks of scurvy, which were vaguely understood to be due to improper diet, but which remained baffling to the end of the Company's history. It was known that "one with scurvy will recover with fresh food and water."⁹ But during an early nineteenth century voyage scurvy could be treated on board only by ærating the drinking water, washing the decks and woodwork with vinegar, boiling canned soup with the usual ration of peas and oatmeal, serving quantities of oil, vinegar, and mustard, substituting wine for spirits, and sometimes distributing a ration of pickled cabbage, the last item of which may have possessed some real virtue.¹⁰

Storms at sea were possibly a greater source of dread. The annals of the Company are all too frequently marked by accounts of vessels blown ashore, thrown on reefs, lost through collision or fire at sea, or listed simply as "missing."¹¹ The storms of the Atlantic and Antarctic were replaced to some extent in the Indian Ocean by the chance of hostile attack. From early in the eighteenth century one of the greatest menaces to East Indiamen arose from the numbers of French frigates which haunted the usual courses to and from India. As the East Indiamen were primarily cargo carriers, the French not infrequently captured them, but as the former went as heavily armed as possible, they seldom capitulated without a struggle. Many of these engagements were extremely bloody, partly owing to the numbers carried and partly to the prevailing custom of boarding and hand-to-hand encounters. During the Napoleonic wars, English vessels were driven to sailing in fleets under naval convoy, which reduced the hazard considerably. But no such list of dangers would be complete without reference to the pirates found on occasion in all seas, and almost constantly to be anticipated in Indian waters. Some of these hailed from European countries, but more of them came from Arabian and Persian ports, which from time immemorial had been piratical breeding grounds. The guns of the East Indiamen were frequently not proof against these marauders, whose chosen method of attack was to surround their quarry with numbers of small boats packed with men who might thus swarm on board and massacre passengers and crew alike.¹²

These and many other dangers often enlivened a voyage around

⁹ Edward Terry, *A Voyage to India* (London, 1655), p. 15.

¹⁰ "Captain Wallis' Voyage around the World," in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, XLVI (1766), 417; Sir Henry Grose, *Voyage to the East Indies* (From *A New Collection of Voyages*, vol. II; London, 1767), p. 474.

¹¹ The use of the lightning rod to reduce the danger to ships' masts was known before the end of the eighteenth century. — See Twining, *op. cit.*, p. 41, for the use of a "chain conductor" during a voyage in 1792.

¹² See Chatterton, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 300, and pp. 197 ff. below.

the Cape, but even imminent dangers could not remove the vast tedium of a passage. Long calms were nearly as hard on nerves as severe storms. Even in fair sailing weather monotony was the rule and many expedients were resorted to for beguiling the time. Strange fish and birds were noted. Sharks were caught. A passing vessel was a notable event. The crossing of the Line was made the occasion for the most outlandish mummeries and breaches of discipline.¹³ And on a voyage where speed of passage was incidental and caution was the watchword of every English captain, the younger members of the ship's company seldom remained long immune from the subtleties and excitement of flirtation, from which the participants did not always emerge unscathed.¹⁴

The courses sailed by the East Indiamen were not identical. On the voyage out, the ships almost invariably started from the Company's docks on the Thames. Passengers usually joined the vessels several days or even weeks later at one of the harbors of the Downs from which the final departure would be made.¹⁵ Thence the ships sailed down the Channel for the open Atlantic and on into the Bay of Biscay. From here any one of three or four routes might be taken during the early nineteenth century, depending chiefly on the character of the vessel, the skill of its captain, the season of year, and the presumed location of enemies.

The Portuguese, in opening up the all-sea route, had crept down the African coast within sight of land. This alone goes far to explain the fact that fifty years were required from the beginning of the explorations of Prince Henry before the Cape was reached, because of the weak and variable winds prevailing along the coast of Africa. Cabral was apparently the first to discover the trade winds blowing from the coast of South America toward the Cape of Good Hope. It had already been found that from the Canaries and Cape Verde Islands a steady northeast wind would carry vessels within two hundred miles of the Brazilian coast. By thus shaping a triangular course through the Atlantic, the time consumed in reaching the latitude of the Cape might be reduced even as the geographical distance was lengthened. This was the course employed generally until the early years of the nineteenth century, when new styles of rigging and im-

¹³ See Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, *Journal of Voyages and Travels* (2 vols., London, 1831), I, 3-18, *passim*; Wathen, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ The case of Warren Hastings inevitably springs to mind (See Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings*). But this incident lacked the tragedy of numerous others which, according to contemporary journals, too often ended in suicide.

¹⁵ George, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (3 vols., London, 1809), I, 3.

proved ability to tack against the wind recommended more direct courses.

On many of the earlier voyages the Cape of Good Hope was not touched at all, inasmuch as the more dependable westerly winds were found far to the south in the latitude of 45° . From this region a course might be shaped through the Mozambique Channel, with stops at Madagascar, or on the East African coast, before continuing on to Ceylon. Some vessels, however, continued well to the east of Madagascar, where good winds were found which would continue to Madras Roads or to Bengal. In such instances, the last previous stops would be made at Madeira in the Canaries, or possibly at St. Helena. During this early period Table Bay was an emergency port rather than a regular port of call for the English.

The capture of Cape Town in 1795 and again in 1806 and contemporaneous changes in sailing technique led to the shaping of more direct courses from Cape Verde to the tip of Africa in which Cape Town became a regular half-way station.¹⁶ St. Helena retained much of its importance as a watering station, but vessels in good condition made the stop less and less frequently after the close of the eighteenth century. By the time of the exile of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815 the island was seldom touched by passing vessels. The return voyage from India differed but little in European waters and not greatly in the Indian Ocean, as such voyages were nearly always made when the winds had reversed their directions.¹⁷

Even with improved vessels and new and commodious way stations, the Cape route remained long, difficult, and tiresome.¹⁸ It enjoyed the single advantage after 1815 of being politically safe. But with the speeding up of European life, due to the effects of the Industrial Revolution, this route proved to be more and more inadequate, and when new means of transportation presently made possible the development of shorter lines between England and India, the Cape route was doomed to suffer a decline, even though continuing to be the main commercial highway for a half century longer.

It has been pointed out that the eastern enterprises of Napoleon Bonaparte focused attention throughout the British world on the

¹⁶ Lord Valentia, *op. cit.*, I, 3-26, gives an excellent account of the resources of St. Helena.

¹⁷ See Archibald Duncan, *The Mariner's Chronicle* (London, 1804).

¹⁸ An article, "Outward Bound," in the *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. I, 195-206, gives a vivid and excellent description of many details of a voyage to India *via* the Cape during the early years of the nineteenth century.

need of new routes of communication between England and India for political purposes.¹⁹ The Industrial Revolution, which was gaining momentum meanwhile, brought attention to a similar need for economic advantage. The England of Castlereagh, with all its unemployment and want and misery, was not the England of Fox and Pitt, nor would Clive have recognized the Indian Presidencies of Lord William Bentinck's time. The difference was to be found principally in the widening of horizons, and these expanded in proportion to the growth of commercial interests. English national policy still rested on a mercantile basis; for that matter, mercantile interests were becoming more dominant than ever. The character of the new era beginning with the treaties of Vienna was determined not so much by cabinet officers and parliamentary speakers as by a host of inventors whose combined efforts vastly speeded up industrial life and produced new problems and new relationships. The British statesmen of the nineteenth century were not so free to create national policies and attitudes as their predecessors had been; they were reduced instead to more or less vain attempts to adapt themselves to the working of new forces which they only vaguely comprehended. The bearing of these developments on international relations is even today imperfectly understood, and early nineteenth century statesmen may be dealt with leniently for failure fully to understand the interrelation of economic and political forces.

The growth of English industry and the changing character of the Indian trade during the first quarter of the nineteenth century gave eloquent testimony on the value of India. In early centuries the Indian trade had been confined to goods of quality, for which India exacted payment in specie. But the quantity production of cheap cloth manufactures, greatly in demand in India, where plenty of raw cotton was grown, changed the old balance of trade and vastly increased India's economic importance to Great Britain. In 1814, the year in which the East India Company's trade monopoly with India was removed, manufactured cloth sent out from Great Britain to India amounted to 817,000 yards, valued at £201,182. By 1819 cloth exports to India had risen to 7,127,661 yards, by 1824 to 23,685,426 yards, and by 1832 to 51,833,913 yards, valued at £3,238,248.²⁰ Again, in 1790, before the commercial effects of the new industrial movement were beginning to be considerably felt, British imports from the

¹⁹ See above, pp. 56, 74, 79.

²⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, p. 97. See James Silk Buckingham, *Explanatory Report on the Plan and Object of Mr. Buckingham's Lectures on the Oriental World* (issued by the Liverpool Committee for Promoting Free Trade to India and China), pp. 30-33.

East amounted to 27,000 tons, and exports thence to 26,400 tons. By 1817 the situation had completely altered, with eastern imports into Great Britain amounting to 80,700 tons and exports to India and neighboring countries to 109,400 tons.²¹ This indicated that India was becoming very much more essential to British welfare than had ever been the case before, and must be guarded and protected accordingly. But it was very imperfectly seen until the century was far advanced that these commercial changes created an entire new set of relationships with parts of Africa and western Asia, and not only with these regions, but with the principal continental Powers as well, before a Suez commercial waterway had been seriously thought of.

Although the Cape route long continued to suffice for the transport of goods, it no longer functioned so satisfactorily after 1815 as in earlier times for purposes of communication, either official or unofficial. Business correspondence began to require more speedy channels. Increasing numbers of expatriated Englishmen — clerks, tradesmen, and soldiers — demanded more frequent and facile means of keeping in touch with friends and relatives. It was not the search for new channels of trade, therefore, but for improved lines of communication which created such new and difficult political problems in the countries of the Near and Middle East after the Napoleonic Wars. To solve these problems the potentiality of steam came to be considered.

Before the Congress of Vienna, at a time when steam power was being applied to the great river systems of North America, the English were building steam vessels of their own for domestic use. By 1815 steamers were in regular operation on the larger canals and rivers, and within a few years more they were making scheduled trips across the English and Irish Channels.²² Before 1820 far-sighted individuals were predicting the early application of steam to transoceanic transportation,²³ and in 1823 a series of campaigns was launched simultaneously in England and in the Indian Presidencies for the establishment of steam communication, either through the Mediterranean, in conjunction with the opening up of some logical overland route across the intervening land

²¹ *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*, XXIII, O.S., 199. See H. L. Hoskins, "The Growth of British Interest in the Route to India," in the *Journal of Indian History*, II, 165-177.

²² Interesting contemporary accounts of the development of steam navigation in English waters are contained in *Parl. Pap.* 1834, No. 478.

²³ For example, the English Consul-General in Egypt, Mr. John Barker, publicly broached the idea as early as 1815, and attempted to take up the matter of steam communication with India with members of the British Government in 1816, but was reproved with the assertion that this was a matter "not in his competence." — Barker, *Syria and Egypt under the Last Five Sultans*, II, 126.

barriers to arms of the Indian Ocean, or around the Cape of Good Hope.²⁴

There were good reasons for the recrudescence of routes impinging on the Mediterranean as steam navigation came to the fore. The character of the early steam vessel itself suggested this, for it did not give promise of proving practicable over very long routes. It was at once a very expensive and a highly inefficient piece of workmanship. There was even some doubt at first whether it could ever be used successfully on the high seas. Among the many difficulties to be encountered were the incrustation of boilers and pipes from using salt water, damage to paddle wheels from high seas, the frequent failure of steam pumps, and faulty design and workmanship in general.²⁵ Frequent stoppages were necessary for the lubrication and readjustment of machinery, and extensive repairs were often called for which necessitated the services of specially equipped foundries.

Early steam engines of all kinds were very inefficient and wasteful. Even for short voyages large quantities of coal were required, while on longer ones almost all of the cargo space had to be used for coal bunkers. For really extensive voyages large and relatively frequent depots of coal were required, and these naturally had to be established by sailing vessels. Even from this brief enumeration of difficulties it is evident that steam vessels, even when assisted by sails, were scarcely equal to any long sustained voyage, such as that around the continent of Africa. It was more nearly feasible to employ them on sections of the shorter water routes involving the English Channel, the Bay of Biscay, the Mediterranean, and either the Red and Arabian Seas or the Persian Gulf, where the total sailing distance between England and India was not more than a third of that by the all-sea route.

English public attention might have been drawn the sooner to the possibilities of effecting speedy communication with the East by steam but for the fact that the regular use of the shorter routes did not survive the Napoleonic Wars.²⁶ The line through Egypt fell into disuse because of the opposition of the Porte to the navigation of the Red Sea and to the prevalence of turbulent political conditions in Egypt. The alternative route through

²⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25; *Asiatic Journal* XIV, O.S., 5.

²⁵ In 1831 a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to "take into consideration the frequent Calamities by Steam Navigation and the best Means of guarding against their Recurrence . . ." — *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 43, pp. 305, 520, 601; *ibid.*, 1834, No. 478, p. 25.

²⁶ In 1802 and for some time thereafter mails were sent to England from India both *via* Suez, Cairo and Alexandria and *via* Basrah and the Syrian desert. At this time private messages were frequently despatched by one or another of these routes, as well.

Syria and Mesopotamia declined because of chaotic conditions throughout western Asia as well as along the European extension of the line. But the interest which declined in the shorter routes to the East after the Napoleonic period experienced a sudden revival, while political conditions in the countries of western Asia were still highly unsettled. This was due to several factors. The increasingly unsatisfactory political situation in and beyond the Levant was becoming a matter of deep concern, not merely to kings and ministers, but for the first time to great numbers of public minded individuals as well. It was argued on all sides that, to offset the territorial gains of Russia and the political influence of France, Britain must needs develop a more effective line of communication which might be controlled, if need be, during a European conflict. Additional interest in such matters was stimulated at the same time by the publication of the experiences of travellers of both sexes who had recently made their way to or from India through Mesopotamia or Egypt and who saw great opportunities for intervention of some kind by their government. Practically all such writers agreed that for travel, as well as despatches, the route *via* Egypt and the Red Sea might be used with a considerable gain in time, if not in comfort, over the Cape route.²⁷ However, it was the growing efficacy of the steam vessel which carried much speculation to the point of experiment.

The first definite scheme recorded for a line of steam vessels between England and India depending on the "overland" route through Egypt was the product of an English naval officer, James Henry Johnston. Finding a considerable degree of interest being manifested in England on the subject of steam communication, he attempted in 1822 to form a company with the immediate object of establishing a steam service between Calcutta and Suez. He was able to secure some financial support in England, where capital was becoming available for almost any kind of new enterprise. He thereupon sailed for Calcutta to complete the organization of his company. Here, however, his project did not appear practicable to any of the financial interests from which support was

²⁷ See, for example, Mrs. Colonel Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England to the Continent of Europe, Egypt and the Red Sea, to India . . . in the years 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828* (2 vols., London, 1830); Lieut.-Col. Fitz-Clarence, *Journal of a Route across India through Egypt to England, in 1817-1818* (London, 1819); *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, p. 726; *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S. Pt. 1, 196-206; Anon., *A Few Notes taken during an Overland Journey from England to India . . .* (Calcutta, 1826); [John Barker], *A Vade-Mecum from India to Europe, by way of Egypt* (London, priv. pr., 1827).

sought, though, as a caustic contemporary said — “The details . . . furnished respecting it are so specious, and all the obstacles in the way of its success are so admirably disposed of, that it is astonishing the projector has not been deluged with contributions or subscriptions already, and that a steamer is not unloading in the port of Suez.”²⁸ Even a more sympathetic writer remarked that — “We have only to state . . . that the measure has been patronized in our eastern capital in a manner fully equal to the encouragement that is given in the mother country to *any* speculative scheme of similar or higher character. The journey across the isthmus of Suez is *of course* regarded as a trifle.”²⁹

The objections to the plan were numerous and obvious. The initial cost, maintenance, and operation of steam vessels was almost a barrier to commercial profits at that time. No attempts had been made to determine whether a steam vessel could profitably operate on a line as long as that from Calcutta to Suez, even with intermediate stops. It was also exceedingly doubtful whether a steam vessel could operate on this line at all during those summer months when the southwest monsoon held sway over the Indian Ocean. But in addition to these difficulties, there was grave doubt whether political conditions in Egypt and Syria would permit of uninterrupted communication between Suez and Alexandria. In any event the Mediterranean end of the line could not readily be developed by such resources as the projector had in view, and in the absence of any government subsidy, it would indeed have been a reckless venture to have embarked on the carrying out of the scheme.

While the immediate response was disappointing to those interested, the proposition was not without result. Early in 1823, a number of enterprising citizens of Calcutta, styling themselves a “Steam Committee,” called a public meeting for the purpose of considering Johnston’s scheme and raising funds in support of it. The immediate financial subscriptions were inconsiderable, but other results were more noteworthy. The meeting proceeded to organize as a “Society for the Encouragement of Steam Navigation between Great Britain and India,” and by establishing a “Steam Fund,” laid the foundations for the eventual realization of their hopes.³⁰ Meanwhile, the Supreme Government of India, which, under the Marquess of Wellesley, had taken the initiative in promoting rapid despatch service during the Na-

²⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XV, O.S., 477-480.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XVII, O.S., 568.

³⁰ *Calcutta Government Gazette*, 17 Jan., 1827; *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25.

poleonic Wars, was preparing to revive and expand that service. In May, 1823, the new Governor-General, Lord Amherst, wrote the Court of Directors, that —

We have for some time past been engaged in inquiries respecting the practicability of opening a communication with England through Egypt by means of steam vessels, and observing from the public prints that the subject has been agitated in England, we consider it will be acceptable to your Honourable Court . . . to be assured that the difficulties on this side of the Egyptian Isthmus are not greater than on the other. . . .³¹

On the basis of these considerations, it was suggested to the Directors that the East India Company place two steam ships in operation on each side of the Isthmus of Suez, four steam vessels being considered sufficient for maintaining a monthly communication at that time. This interesting but impracticable suggestion did not impress the materialistic Court, and the recommendation was ignored. More than a decade was destined to elapse before this body would sanction the expenditure of any of their funds for the development of steam lines of their own, and then only under duress.

At this juncture, however, with both the Government and the public of the Bengal Presidency interested in steam communication, a degree of coöperation was attained which brought the common object a step nearer realization. The Governor-General, who had but lately stated that — “We do not hold out the encouragement of Government to the commencement of an enterprise of which the practicability and ultimate success appeared in our judgment very doubtful,”³² reconsidered his attitude. By the end of the year (1823) his conversion to a trial of steam navigation was complete. Late in December, he reported to the Court of Directors that, anticipating their approval, “we accordingly resolved to place at the disposal of the Committee the sum of 20,000 rupees as a contribution toward the attainment of the object in question.”³³ But this grant was rigidly conditioned by requiring that any steam vessel despatched from England to India with the view of obtaining a portion of the Bengal steam fund as a reward should be of no less than 300 tons burden,³⁴ that not

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, p. 726.

³² *Ibid.*, App. 24, pp. 675-676.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 676; *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, O.S., 488; *ibid.*, XIX, O.S., 837.

³⁴ This provision was inserted without regard to a law on the English statute books that no vessel of less than 500 tons burden might be permitted to sail between

more than 1,00,000 rupees (1 lac) should be granted by the Steam Committee as a premium to any contestant, and that two round trips must be made between England and India before any bonus could be claimed. The Court of Directors generously approved this action, an attitude which is a matter for surprise in view of the reluctance usually shown in permitting any disbursements not absolutely necessary.

The terms of the Bengal Government grant of 20,000 rupees practically determined the conditions under which the Steam Committee undertook to bring about the commencement of steam communication with the home country. At a meeting held on December 17, 1823, a resolution was adopted which included the following item:

That the amount received under the subscriptions opened for this purpose, . . . or if the net receipts from the subscription shall exceed . . . one lac of Sicca Rupees, so much therefore as shall amount to that sum, be assigned, as a Premium, to any individuals, or company, being British subjects, who may first establish a Communication by Steam Vessels between Great Britain and Bengal, by either of the routes above-mentioned, before the expiration of the year 1826.³⁵

Other details of the offer recapitulated those of the Government donation, and added that the minimum of four steam voyages between England and Bengal must average not more than seventy days each.³⁶

The nature of the Calcutta Steam Committee's award and the date by which the stipulated four voyages were to be completed, appeared to argue in favor of the Cape route, which the Committee evidently had in mind. On this line only one vessel would be required for experimental purposes as against at least two by either of the shorter routes, hence the capital investment would be much smaller. Also, because of the prevailing winds along the route, sails might successfully be employed as auxiliary power, which would be a more doubtful matter in the Red Sea or Persian Gulf.

England and India. Possibly the law was interpreted as applying only to sailing vessels. The steam vessel which first made the voyage to India came within the law, however, and claimed 500 tons.

³⁵ *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, VII, xix.

³⁶ Neither of the other Indian Presidencies assisted in this, as they were pre-occupied at this time in considering their own projects for steam lines. There was little feeling of unity among the Anglo-Indian communities, even in such matters of general concern.

It was quite natural, in spite of the limitations inherent in the steamship, that the first attempt to bridge the distance between England and India by the use of steam was directed to the all-sea route. This was the traditional English passage-way to the East — one which had been acquired and monopolized only after many struggles, and the one which had sufficed for the establishment of a great commercial empire in India. Because it was an all-water passage, and could be protected and controlled as long as British fleets dominated the seas, it was naturally looked upon as peculiarly Britain's own. The passage was subject to no whim of Sultan or Pasha. Jealous and suspicious European governments could not inspect or tamper at pleasure with such communications. There need be no transshipment of mails, passengers, or cargoes. Its course did not lie chiefly in the blistering tropics. Moreover, the application of steam to this route was thought to promise a transit as speedy as any which could be accomplished by shorter routes having difficult land barriers.³⁷

The prospect of large reward immediately attracted a considerable number of promoters, both in India and England, and none more powerfully than Capt. Johnston. He readily altered his earlier plan of establishing a line of steam vessels between Calcutta and Suez in favor of one between England and India by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and hastened back to England to complete his arrangements. Once again in England he had little difficulty, in view of the tantalizing prospect, in effecting the organization of a steam navigation company with a proposed capital of £200,000. Ownership of the vessel was presently made up into 64 shares of £500 each, which were subscribed by 32 English financiers, most of them members of large London commercial houses.³⁸ It was perhaps appropriate that the offices of the new concern should be located in the South Sea House, a name reminiscent of an earlier speculative venture.

During the year and a half following the publication of the Calcutta Steam Committee's prize offer, Capt. Johnston and his associates were feverishly at work pushing the construction of a

³⁷ Frederick Sheer, *The Cape of Good Hope versus Egypt; or Political and Commercial Considerations on the Proper Line of Steam Communication with the East Indies* (London, [1839]), p. 14; Henry Wise, *An Analysis of One Hundred Voyages to and from India, China, etc., . . . with Remarks on the Advantages of Steam-power applied as an auxiliary Aid to Shipping . . .* (London, 1839), p. xix; *Asiatic Journal*, XXX, N.S., Pt. I, 85; *ibid.*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. I, 138.

³⁸ *Oriental Herald*, IV, 395-396; *Asiatic Journal*, XVII, O.S., 568; Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, I, 520; *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 139.

large steam vessel, in the hope of forestalling any possible rival. This was to be a pioneering venture in more than one respect. The vessel was to be a monster of its kind with a measurement of 500 tons burden, in view of the distance to be traversed, the heavy seas to be encountered, and the large amount of fuel to be carried. The ship was no larger than many of the East Indiamen in the East India Company's fleet, it is true, but this was the first steam vessel built in England designed exclusively for service on the high seas.³⁹

While the vessel was building, the wildest rumors were afloat. It was reported in the Indian press that the new vessel would be equipped with an engine of a new type, using such small quantities of fuel that no stops would be required *en route* for an additional supply. A voyage of sixty days was expected to bring the prodigy from the Thames to the Hooghly. So wild and unfounded were the claims made for the new vessel by those who knew little of it that its subsequent failure nearly to measure up to these sanguine expectations caused a very decided reaction against any plan for the application of steam to the longer ocean routes for years to come.

Report was also current of other great steamships which were being secretly prepared for the voyage to India in the hope of capturing the substantial prize.⁴⁰ But whatever plans may have been on foot, Capt. Johnston was the first to complete his preparations for a steam voyage. In March, 1825, the *Oriental Herald* regaled its readers with the intriguing statement that —

We are at length enabled to announce the certainty of a steam-vessel sailing for India by way of the Cape of Good Hope. All thoughts of pursuing the route by the Mediterranean and Red Sea appear to have been judiciously abandoned. In the way now chosen there are no obstacles but a supply of fuel at intermediate stations and the weathering of heavy gales off the Cape. The former is a mere question of expenses. . . . The latter is only to be determined by experiments, but . . . [there is] the strongest hope.⁴¹

The prospectus of the venture, published by the Company in stating their plans for a regular line of bi-monthly steamers by the Cape, said of this their first vessel, that "calculations hold out every prospect of her reaching Calcutta within two months

³⁹ Low, *op. cit.*, I, 520. It was said that the Dutch were the first to build steamships for ocean navigation, to be used in their eastern possessions.

⁴⁰ *Oriental Herald*, I, 195; *ibid.*, VII, 171.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 395.

from the time of her leaving Portsmouth.”⁴² This estimate was but one-third or one-fourth of the time usually required for the voyage by the ships of the East India Company, but it was supposed that, since a steam vessel would not be dependent on winds, a straight track would materially reduce the distance to be covered.

By the time Capt. Johnston's vessel was ready, the entire British world awaited with vast interest and deep concern the outcome of the venture. Cynics prepared to scoff and enthusiasts to rejoice. The promoters of the enterprise had such great faith in their calculations and in the performance of the vessel that not even a trial trip was made before the commencement of the voyage. But the time allowed by the Calcutta Steam Committee was growing short and final preparations had to be unduly hastened. Those who were fortunate or courageous, as the case may have been, in being selected as passengers for the historic voyage, embarked at London in the middle of August, 1825, and the steamer immediately set out for Falmouth, whence the official start was to be made. This first stage of the trip was somewhat marred by a dangerous fire, which resulted from the stowing of coal directly over the engine boiler. The incident was minimized and hushed up as much as possible by the Company's officials, and little time was lost. On August 16, the pathfinding steamship, happily named the *Enterprize*, steamed out of Falmouth harbor for Calcutta with flags flying and great paddle wheels churning, and bearing important official despatches and seventeen passengers.⁴³

News of the voyage drifted back to England from points along the route. Almost from the outset it became apparent that the vessel was not making the anticipated progress. Subsequently it appeared that the enormous weight of the coal with which the ship started, and its improper location on board, gave the steamer an unlooked for draught, and seriously impeded progress for a considerable time. Storms and head winds caused further delay, providing special handicaps for a paddle steamer where even immersion was necessary to effective operation. Finally, after the original fuel supply had been exhausted, the *Enterprize* was compelled to change tack and depend entirely on sails in order to reach the Cape. The voyage from Cape Town, where the single coal depot had been located, was largely a replica of the first half of the voyage.⁴⁴ The vessel arrived at Calcutta only after the ex-

⁴² *Ibid.*, IV, 396.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, VI, 580-581. Among the passengers was a sort of Jonah, one Thomas Waghorn, who later distinguished himself as a proponent of the route through Egypt. — See *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., p. 208.

⁴⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XX, O.S., 371, 487; *ibid.*, XXI, 663, 785-786; *Oriental Herald*, VI, 580-581, IX, 360-361.

piration of 113 days, of which 10 had been spent at anchor, 40 entirely under sail, and only 62 days under steam.⁴⁵

Although bitterly disappointing to those interested in ocean steam navigation and communication, the voyage of the *Enterprize* was in many respects remarkable. Considering the experimental stage of steam navigation and the nature of the difficulties overcome, the fact that the voyage was completed at all warrants its being rated as something of a triumph.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, because the conditions laid down by the Calcutta Steam Committee were not met as to time consumed in transit, and because of the considerable dependence on sail propulsion, the trip in contemporary eyes was generally considered a dismal failure. Even Capt. Johnston himself admitted before a Parliamentary Committee a few years later that he was "thoroughly convinced that the communication between England and Calcutta under the existing state of steam navigation [could] never be accomplished but at a heavy sacrifice."⁴⁷ A few other experimental steam voyages made around the Cape of Good Hope about the same time only strengthened this conclusion.⁴⁸

The acknowledged failure of the *Enterprize* was a great blow to the promoters of the project and to the plans of the Anglo-Indian community at Calcutta. The owners of the vessel were threatened with a considerable loss, since the reward of the Bengal Steam Society could not be claimed, and the vessel was obviously incapable of making regular voyages around the Cape. Partial relief for the investors was furnished, however, by the purchase of the steamer by the Bengal Government for £40,000, which was approximately the cost of building.⁴⁹ For several years thereafter the *Enterprize* gave a good account of herself in eastern

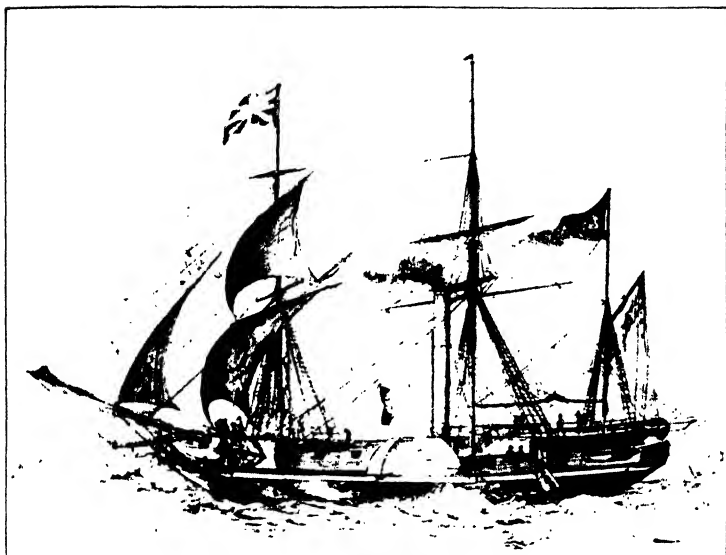
⁴⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 139; *ibid.*, 1834, No. 478, App. I, p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Observations on the Advantages and Possibility of Successfully Employing Steam Power in Navigating Ships between this Country and the East Indies* (London, priv. pr., 1829), pp. 3-5. Cf. *Niles' Register*, XXX, 92.

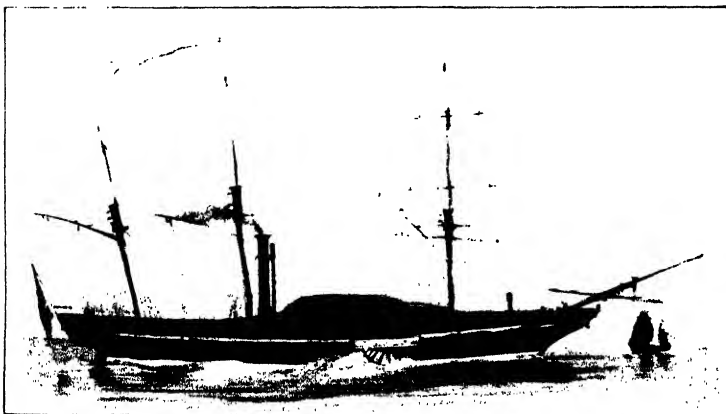
⁴⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 144, 494-495.

⁴⁸ *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, VII, xix-xxi; *Oriental Herald*, IX, 360-361; *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, O.S., 607; *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, pp. 1-5. The *Betsy* of Bordeaux was one steam vessel which made the voyage to India in the same year, but with no greater success than that of the *Enterprize*. A year or so later a Dutch steamship, the *Atlas*, said to have been 230 feet long, of 1800 tons burden, and with engines totalling 300 horse-power, undertook to establish a steam communication with the Dutch East Indies. This large vessel was reported to have been more completely a failure than the *Enterprize*. All of these vessels, of course, made use of sails as much as possible. — *Observations on the Advantages and Possibilities of Successfully Employing Steam Power in Navigating Ships between this country and the East Indies*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 139-141.



The S.S. *Enterprize*, which reached India from England
in 1826



The *Firebrand*, first Admiralty Packet Steamer in the
Mediterranean

waters. During the Burmese War she was employed in towing transports to and from Rangoon and in carrying despatches,⁵⁰ and was subsequently used in an unsuccessful attempt to establish a steam line between Calcutta and Suez. The pioneering efforts of Capt. Johnston were also not permitted to go altogether unrequited. In 1827 the Calcutta Steam Committee voted him one-half of the existing steam fund, the other half being reserved for other meritorious attempts of the same kind. Capt. Johnston, having continued for a time in command of the *Enterprise*, spent the remainder of a very useful life at Calcutta originating and developing lines of steam vessels on the great river systems of India.⁵¹

The voyage of the *Enterprise* was considered by many as showing that while the all-sea route might be practicable, it was not profitable for steam navigation.⁵² However, in spite of this conclusion, and in face of the disappointing results of other experimental voyages, both the Supreme Government of India and the mercantile community at Calcutta persisted in advocating the development of the Cape route by steam vessels as long as any degree of public interest could be maintained and ambitious promoters were found to respond. The interest of Calcutta in the all-sea route has already been alluded to in indicating the interest of Anglo-Indian merchants in a waterway which might be utilized for the purposes of steam trade as well as for purposes of communication. The Cape route was also free from political dangers. But the rivalry and competition of merchant houses in India, combined with the mutual prejudices of the Indian Presidencies also had much bearing on the routes and means advocated for steam communication after 1825.⁵³

From the point of view of accessibility from Europe, the Indian presidencies occupy very dissimilar positions. Wind and ocean currents, as well as continental outlines, direct any vessels, whether propelled by steam or sails, from the Cape of Good Hope toward the east coast of India, making Madras and Calcutta the logical eastern termini. Lines of communication extending eastward from the Mediterranean, however, whether traversing Egypt and

⁵⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, O.S., 634, 735, 785; *ibid.*, XXII, 600 ff., 713; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 468, 521.

⁵¹ *Calcutta Government Gazette*, 17 Jan., 1827; *Asiatic Journal*, VIII, N.S., Pt. II, 225; *ibid.*, IX, Pt. II, 101. In 1838 the *Enterprise* was dismantled and her boilers installed in a new vessel built at Calcutta to receive them. — *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 103.

⁵² Low, *op. cit.*, I, 521.

⁵³ See *Asiatic Journal*, XX, O.S., 358-359; *Oriental Herald*, VI, 574-575.

the Red Sea, or utilizing natural highways through Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Gulf, find in Bombay their logical objective. During the months of June, July, August, and September, to be sure, when the southwest monsoon is at its height, sailing vessels find it impossible to make direct crossings between the Red Sea and Bombay. Even the steam vessels of the early nineteenth century frequently found it necessary to make wide detours from the mouth of the Red Sea, so that some advantage of the prevailing winds might be taken in reaching the coast of India. But allowing for all deviations, the distance between Suez and Bombay was materially less than between Suez and Calcutta.

Bombay as the base port for lines of steam communication between England and India would naturally enjoy a considerable moral and commercial advantage over other Indian ports. As the seat of a presidency, Bombay might thus outstrip her sister presidencies of Bengal and Madras, and recover the position of supremacy she had enjoyed before the elevation of Calcutta by the Regulating Act of 1773.⁵⁴ Hence it is not strange that the Government and mercantile community of Calcutta, generally aided and abetted by official and mercantile elements of Madras, preferred to agitate for the establishment of steam communication *via* the Cape of Good Hope rather than to contribute to the rise of a rival presidency.

On January 16, 1827, a general meeting of the subscribers to the Bengal Steam Fund met at the Town Hall in Calcutta to consider the disposition of the fund, which then totalled over £10,000. After some discussion the subscribers to the fund voted that half the amount of the Fund be awarded to Capt. Johnston, whose efforts were considered meritorious, and that the other half of the fund should "be held by the Committee for two years to remunerate any successful attempt to carry into effect the original object."⁵⁵ This action was taken in the hope that some one of the several plans then being agitated might bear fruit.

One of the propositions for a steam line between England and Bengal had as its chief protagonist a young Anglo-Indian, James W. Taylor, a brother of the English political agent at Bagdad and Basrah, Major Robert Taylor.⁵⁶ Young Taylor, being attracted by the prospect of reward which had prompted Capt. Johnston's venture, spent a part of the year 1825 in England

⁵⁴ *Oriental Herald*, VI, 574-575; *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, O.S., 89, 607.

⁵⁵ *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, VII, xxi; *Oriental Herald*, XX, 183.

⁵⁶ Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 129; *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 8, p. 36.

trying to form a company which might compete with Capt. Johnston's and by early and successful voyages to Bengal secure the coveted award.⁵⁷ A skeleton organization was formed and some funds subscribed, but the project was still only half matured when the *Enterprise* sailed on her maiden voyage. The results of this experiment were so negative that Taylor and his associates found it impracticable to continue their attempts to establish a steam navigation concern for the India service at the moment. In 1827 Taylor applied to the Steam Committee at Calcutta for compensation to offset the losses he had already incurred in the cause of steam navigation, but his claims were disallowed. The Steam Committee, while ready to support honest endeavor and worthy experiment, did not wish to be considered a philanthropical organization.⁵⁸ Following this rebuff, Taylor transferred his attention to steam routes leading eastward from the Mediterranean, where his plans more nearly approached fruition.

Meanwhile, the idea of establishing a steam line *via* the Cape, fostered by the remainder of the Bengal Steam Fund, was vigorously taken up by another young promoter, Thomas Waghorn. This unique individual, whose vocabulary did not contain the word "impossible," became distinguished as the projector of communication with India by almost all of the known routes, and particularly that through Egypt. Born in 1800, he entered the Royal Navy at the early age of twelve, and at seventeen had successfully passed the examination for a lieutenancy, establishing a new record in this respect. Because of his extreme youth he did not receive a commission at the time, and for some years he served without rank in the Bengal Pilot Service. During the Burmese War, 1824-1826, he distinguished himself for signal bravery in the capture of a commanding site at Rangoon, but was nevertheless released from the Indian Navy shortly afterward because of his restless propensities.⁵⁹

Waghorn's insistent energy soon found a suitable vent in projects for steam communication, which contained enough of romance and of daring to capture his imagination. Discovering that the Calcutta Government was still imbued with the desire to develop the Cape route despite the unsatisfactory performance of the *Enterprise*, he promptly evolved a scheme for a steam com-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, pp. 727-728.

⁵⁸ *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, VII, xxi.

⁵⁹ *London Times*, 15 March, 1884, p. 5; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 521; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, p. 22. Waghorn was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Royal Navy in 1842, "as an official acknowledgment of [his] exertions in establishing the overland route to India." — *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 375.

munication at regular quarterly intervals with which he was able to attract the attention of that Government.

In February, 1827, Waghorn returned to England armed with a letter of recommendation from the Supreme Government to the Court of Directors. With his project thus sponsored, he set about securing further patronage for a line of mail packet steamers to India. He managed to secure hearings before various commercial organizations and he made numerous public addresses, but his incoherent speech, his exaggerated statements, and the recollection of Capt. Johnston's failure all inhibited any great display of enthusiasm for his proposition. He was able, however, to secure some conditional promises of support from merchants in the India trade, and after insistent appeals, the Court of Directors reluctantly agreed to supply engines for the first vessel which might be built under his plan. Books were thereupon opened for subscriptions by the newly-formed East India Trade Committee, while Waghorn hastened back to Calcutta to bid for the remainder of the Bengal Steam Fund and to secure further support from the Bengal Government.

He had meanwhile completed his program in detail. He proposed to establish a monthly steam communication eventually, beginning with an immediate quarterly service. At the outset only Government and private mails were to be carried, and he anticipated his profits from a new and high rate of postage on these — as much as four shillings for each single letter and four shillings per ounce on parcels. This rate he believed to be justified by the anticipated increase in speed and regularity of delivery. With small steamers of about 280 tons, and with three or four coal depots, he believed that voyages might be made in seventy days, the maximum interval originally prescribed by the Calcutta Steam Committee in its prize offer. For the establishment of this service, Waghorn estimated that an initial capital of only £12,000 would be required.⁶⁰

The project sounded so plausible that a special meeting of the subscribers to the Bengal Steam Fund met on July 30, 1828, to consider making a special appropriation for the work by setting aside some of the conditions originally specified as the basis of awards from the steam fund. There was some difference of opinion in the meeting on this proposal. Capt. H. T. Prinsep, Secretary to the Bengal Government, believed that Waghorn's calculations as to speed, fuel-carrying capacity, and practicability of such small steam vessels was considerably overrated. But Capt. Johnston, who was present, cast the die by expressing com-

⁶⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, O.S., 218, 219.

plete faith in Waghorn's estimate. The meeting thereupon voted that, "should no speculation promising greater or equal success be undertaken before the 19th of January, 1829, the unappropriated fund for the encouragement of steam navigation shall, under proper security, be applied for the purpose of enabling Mr. Waghorn to carry his plan into execution."⁶¹ The Bengal Government also approved the proposed postage rates.

Pausing at every English community *en route* to England, Waghorn arrived in April, 1829, confident of success.⁶² His high hopes, however, were quickly subdued. The English Post Office confronted him with an Act of Parliament prescribing the rates of Indian postage, thus removing the principal basis of his expectation of revenue. The Court of Directors were unwilling to carry out the agreement they had made earlier. Added to these discouragements, the funds from eastern steam committees, which were his chief reliance, were not remitted.⁶³

Waghorn felt he had no choice but to return to India to ascertain the reasons for lack of support. For one particular reason he decided to go out by way of Egypt and the Red Sea. He was aware of the drift of public attention to this route, now that the Cape route was discredited, and wished to become identified with it should it promise to be more practicable than the other. In an unsuccessful attempt to establish a new record for a speedy passage,⁶⁴ Waghorn reached India on March 21, 1830, to find that projects for a steam line between India and Suez were already being everywhere discussed.⁶⁵ Wishing to keep in the forefront of the movement, Waghorn soon proclaimed himself a leading exponent of the Red Sea route, and remained a conspicuous advocate of the line during the remainder of his life.

A single event at this moment practically completed the ruin of the Cape route as a line for steam communication between Great Britain and India. On March 20, 1830, the day before Waghorn arrived at Bombay, a sturdy little steamer, the *Hugh Lindsay*, which had been built at Bombay of India teak and fitted with engines from England, left that port for the Red Sea on an

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, XXVI, O.S., 729; XXVII, 218, 219.

⁶² *Ibid.*, XXVII, O.S., 479, 486-487; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 521; *Oriental Herald*, XX, 185. In supporting his scheme, Waghorn pointed out that it had the approval of the Hon. Hugh Lindsay, Chairman of the East India Court of Directors, Captain Ross, of the late expedition to the North Polar regions, Mr. Maudslay, the steam engineer and manufacturer, and Mr. Gurney, inventor of the steam coach.

⁶³ Recourse was also had to printed propaganda. A pamphlet privately printed by Waghorn during this interval, entitled "Steam Navigation to India by the Cape of Good Hope," is of considerable interest.

⁶⁴ See pp. 107, 118-120 below.

⁶⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 183-184, 198; *ibid.*, IV, Pt. II, 23-24.

unheralded voyage. Suez was reached about a month later after an entirely successful passage.⁶⁶ Even the *Calcutta Gazette* could not refrain from saying that "this experiment proves not only the practicability but the facility of steam navigation by the Red Sea route."⁶⁷

The Cape route continued to be discussed academically as a possible steam route until the opening of the Suez Canal put a final quietus on its consideration as a principal artery of British communications with the East. Actually, the Cape line was used for purposes of steam navigation only when new steamers were sent out from England for regular service in Indian and eastern waters, until the rise of the South African and Australasian colonies demanded steam service of their own late in the century.

⁶⁶ Low, *op. cit.*, I, 520, 526; James Douglas, *Bombay and Western India*, II, 331, n.

⁶⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 197.

CHAPTER V

TENTATIVE TRIALS OF THE SUEZ PASSAGE

THE possibilities and advantages in steam communication between England and India appealed as strongly to the English in Bombay as to the Calcutta community. This interest did not take form in projects for lines of steamships which would employ the route around the Cape of Good Hope, however. Instead, it focused on one plan after another for the use of steam in the opening up of new lines by way of the Red Sea and Egypt, or, as a possible alternative, by way of the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, and Syria. Steam lines around the Cape would benefit Bombay relatively little, while the development of either of the more direct routes between Europe and India would tend greatly to reduce the isolation of the Bombay Presidency and increase its relative importance. Of the two natural channels leading toward Europe, the inhabitants of Bombay had greater faith in the Red Sea, partly because a shorter overland journey was required to reach European waters, and partly because at the outset it was better known than the other.¹

Ground was broken for a steam route by way of the Red Sea by Mountstuart Elphinstone, soon after he became Governor of Bombay.² In May, 1823, when Calcutta was first taking up the idea of the Cape route, Elphinstone proposed to the Court of Directors in London that the East India Company undertake the opening of the Red Sea route with steam vessels. Earlier attempts to make regular use of this line by employing sailing vessels had been fruitless. As Elphinstone pointed out, "although the whole passage from London to Bombay was once made in two months, yet it generally takes three months to go from Bombay even to Suez. The great advantage of a steam boat is, that it is independent of wind. It would therefore go through all the seas between this and England, and at all seasons, nearly at the same rate." He thought that by means of steam vessels

¹ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIV, O.S., 719-722; XXV, O.S., 40-42.

² *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735.—I, 28.

communication between Bombay and London might be made more rapid than that between Bombay and Calcutta. As to the European end of such a line, he said, "We have here alluded to the circuitous communication by the Straits of Gibraltar, because in time of war, when quick communication is most required, we might not be able to send the packets through France. . ." Two steam vessels on each side of the Isthmus of Suez, he thought, would suffice for regular contact. "Egypt," he remarked, "has seldom or never been so disturbed as to stop our packets, but if it were so, the steam boats might for the time go to some port in Syria on the one side and to Bussorah on the other, so that the packet would still pass with great rapidity, though not so quick as through Egypt."³

The Bombay Government made another similar proposal after the voyage of the *Enterprise* from England to Calcutta in 1825-1826, but the Court of Directors took no notice. The finances of the East India Company were in bad condition, and the Directors were a body of men to whom any change was anathema. Besides, the respective merits of the two routes mentioned by Governor Elphinstone were unknown, and remained undetermined for years to come.

Pending actual attempts to employ steam vessels between Indian and western ports, the estimated advantages and difficulties of the route proposed by Governor Elphinstone were played up in contemporary journals according to their respective geographical and editorial prejudices. The Calcutta *India Gazette*, for example, as was to be expected, believed that "It [the overland route] appears to be on the whole much less commodious . . . than that round the Cape of Good Hope. . . A person may consume ten months, where he only calculated on four or five being necessary."⁴ The *Oriental Herald*, published in London by one James Silk Buckingham, who had had long and unpleasant experience in India and had several times used the overland passage, spoke of the proposed communication in dubious vein. Plundering Arabs, heated desert, lack of fuel, and the plague, he pointed out, furnished almost insuperable obstacles: and he concluded that, "However desirable such a speedy communication may be, it is not likely, until the obstacles . . . shall be removed, to be carried into effect."⁵ The *Bombay Courier*, on the other hand, saw —

³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 726.

⁴ *India Gazette*, 27 Nov., 1833, quoted in *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, 26.

⁵ *Oriental Herald*, I, 87. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 615; *ibid.*, III, 145.

An open sea . . . exempt for eight months of the year from stormy and unsettled weather, [which] extends to the straits of Babelmandel, while the island of Socotra affords a convenient situation for a dépôt of fuel. On passing these straits, the Red Sea, like a vast natural canal, extends nearly due north for upwards of a thousand miles, till it almost meets the Mediterranean; and it is hardly possible to look at a map of the world without receiving a kind of impression that nature, in her physical operations, had intended those two seas to facilitate the communication between Europe, Asia, and Africa, and left it to the enterprise and ingenuity of man to take advantage of her arrangements.⁶

This was a rather idealistic picture. Actually, the Red Sea, while truly offering a long, navigable channel, was beset with almost every kind of impediment and danger known to navigation. Its shores were rocky, with promontories extending far into the narrow sea to catch unwary vessels. Its bed was in places almost bottomless, affording no hold for anchors, in others cluttered with coral reefs and submerged rocks. The winds of the Sea were notoriously fickle, ceasing entirely for hours or days, or coming in tempests to drive unlucky vessels ashore within the reach of watchful and conscienceless plunderers.

Other dangers appealed equally to the imagination, and one great deterrent to the regular use of either the route through Egypt or that through Mesopotamia and Syria was the dreaded plague, which visited all the countries of western Asia and Egypt nearly every year during the hot season.⁷ A canal across the Isthmus of Suez was not infrequently mentioned as a possible solution of this and other problems.⁸ But such suggestions were of little avail at so early a date, and the horrors attending the outbreaks of disease in Egypt and Syria were unquestionably one of the most potent factors in delaying the actual opening of either of the shorter land passages in conjunction with steam lines. Fear

⁶ *Bombay Courier*, 25 March, 1826, quoted in *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, O.S., 607.

⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 4, p. 24; *Asiatic Journal*, XX, O.S., 359; *ibid.*, XXIV, O.S., 719; *ibid.*, XXV, O.S., 40-42; *Oriental Herald*, I, 84-87, 176; *ibid.*, IV, 575; Mrs. Col. Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland to India*, II, 395 ff.; Frederick Forbes, A.M., M.D., *Thesis on the Nature and History of the Plague . . . for which a Gold Medal was awarded by the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Edinburgh*. . . (Edinburgh, 1840); Lieut. H. Congreve, *A Suggestion for the Cure of the Cholera* (London, 1842). Plague specifics suggested by medical authorities and travellers varied from the wearing of medicated clothing and abstention from meats to immersions in olive oil or the inhaling of "protoxide of nitrogen."

⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, O.S., 330; *ibid.*, XX, O.S., 364, 538-542, 600; *Oriental Herald*, V, 5-9; *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 6, pp. 28-34; *Niles' Register*, XXXI, 92.

of the plague gradually subsided after its characteristics became better known. Dread of nomadic desert tribes, which had a more potent foundation, also was being steadily reduced throughout this early period by the strong arm of Mehemet Ali, first in the Egyptian desert, and later even in Syria and Arabia.⁹

Meanwhile, Governor Elphinstone continued his plans for the navigation of the Red Sea by commencing a series of systematic surveys, and in 1827 at the close of his term he displayed his faith in the value of this route by making his way to England *via* Egypt.¹⁰ His successor at Bombay, Sir John Malcolm, was a no less zealous advocate of the Red Sea route to England. During his energetic administration marine surveys were continued, coal depots were established, and the first concrete proof was given of the feasibility of steam navigation between Bombay and Egypt. Immediately after taking up his duties at the Bombay Presidency, Malcolm outlined a plan for opening the entire line between Bombay and England *via* Egypt, basing his plan on the use of fast steamships. His main proposal rested on the idea that, to be sufficiently practical, steam voyages must be made in each direction at least once per month. However, as a preliminary arrangement, he suggested that one steamer be put into operation on either side of the Isthmus of Suez, until practical experiment had shown the best method of increasing the service. He believed that by proper coöperation at the Isthmus, mails and despatches might be transmitted between India and England in as brief a time as 34 days, and that the expense of such transit could be defrayed by a heavy postage on private letters.¹¹

By way of adding example to precept, Malcolm's steam plans and other official despatches were forwarded *via* the overland route to the Court of Directors in December, 1828. These papers stated the Governor's intention of making an experimental steam voyage in the following year, by sending the *Enterprize* steamer, with the consent of the Supreme Government of India, from Bombay to Suez. He requested of the Court that they make arrangements for another steam vessel to come to Alexandria, bringing out mails and passengers for India, and receiving those homeward bound.

Believing that his plan would be approved, Governor Malcolm

⁹ David George Hogarth, *The Penetration of Arabia: A Record of the Development of Western Knowledge concerning the Arabian Peninsula* (New York, 1904), pp. 101-104.

¹⁰ London *Times*, 15 March, 1884; Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, I, 525-526.

¹¹ Barker, *Egypt and Syria under the Last Five Sultans of Turkey*, II, 123.

spent the next few months in making preparations for the steam experiment. He had already established one coal depot at Mocha, on the Arabian coast. In February, 1829, the *Thetis*, of the Indian Navy, a brig consort carrying a large cargo of coal, and a native ship with miscellaneous naval supplies, were despatched from Bombay to establish depots at Aden, Jeddah, Cosseir, and Suez.¹² Soon afterward a government bulletin was issued, announcing November 15 as the date for despatching the steamer from Bombay, and stating the rates of postage to be collected on private letters.¹³ Meanwhile, John Barker, the English Consul-General in Egypt, had secured permission from the Egyptian Government for the transmission of English mails and passengers through the domain of the Pasha, who was on the whole well disposed toward the project.

The immediate results of these well-laid plans were altogether disheartening. No vessel was despatched by any of the authorities in London to coöperate with the *Enterprize* at Alexandria, and no steps were taken to provide for the carriage of the expected mails and passengers from Egypt to Malta, which was then the terminus of the British Government steam packet line. It was rumored in London that the Court of Directors had tried to charter a steamer of adequate size and power for the voyage to Egypt, but, becoming appalled at the expense which would be involved, hastily washed their hands of the whole proposition of steam transit for the time being.¹⁴

However that may have been, the *Enterprize* failed to keep faith on her part. Although repaired expressly for the trial trip to Suez, the vessel had hardly set out for that destination when accidents to her machinery made a return to port imperative. There it was decided that the steamer was unfit for so strenuous and long-sustained a voyage, and having failed to make history on this opportune occasion, the *Enterprize* thus passed ingloriously from the scene.

Of the several persons who had hoped to take passage in a steamer from England and continue in the *Enterprize* to India, only two made their way to Suez. These two were Messrs. J. W. Taylor and Thomas Waghorn. Taylor had been commissioned by the Court of Directors to make certain investigations of the Suez route as a steam passage, but he was primarily interested in establishing a commercial line of steamers on either side of Egypt, between England and Calcutta. His rival, Waghorn, also car-

¹² *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, O.S., 103, 339, 622.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I, N.S., Pt. II, 216-217; *Oriental Herald*, XXIII, 320.

¹⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, O.S., 506 ff.; *ibid.*, I, N.S., Pt. I, 227-278; Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 125-128.

ried despatches from the Court of Directors addressed to the authorities in Bombay, and hinted darkly at being personally commissioned to examine the practicability of the route.¹⁵ Almost simultaneously, still a third young exponent of steam communication, Lieutenant F. R. Chesney, arrived in Egypt where he was furnished with a list of queries from the Court of Directors. The situation was prophetic. Chesney became the great apostle of a steam route to India by the Euphrates River and the Persian Gulf, Waghorn became a leading exponent of the Suez line, while Taylor lost his life in an attempt to determine the relative advantages of the two proposed routes.

Sir John Malcolm was cautioned by the Court of Directors at the outset of his official term not to waste money on speculative ventures. The policy of the East India Company was to leave such enterprises as the development of steam navigation within the bounds of its monopoly to private initiative.¹⁶ Malcolm believed, however, that steam communication could not succeed if left to private agencies because of the magnitude of the task of building, fuelling, and operating steam vessels. So while giving every encouragement to commercial undertakings of this nature, he lost no time in making plans to develop a steam line in connection with the Bombay Marine. In 1828 the hull of a steam vessel was put under construction in the Government dockyards at Bombay, and engines were ordered from the famous builder Maudslay in England.¹⁷

The failure of the *Enterprize* did not in the least interrupt work on the new vessel, which, in honor of and perhaps to soothe the Chairman of the Court of Directors, was christened the *Hugh Lindsay*. The vessel, of 411 tons burden and equipped with two eighty-horse-power engines, was launched in October, 1829, and was immediately prepared for a voyage to Suez.¹⁸ No delay was required for the establishment of coal depots, those prepared for the *Enterprize* being already available. The *Hugh Lindsay* was despatched from Bombay on her maiden voyage March 20, 1830,

¹⁵ *Annual Register*, XCII (1850), Pt. II, 198-199; Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 127.

¹⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — I, 288; *ibid.*, No. 735. — II, 759.

¹⁷ *Oriental Herald*, XXIII, 320; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, O.S., 103; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 520; *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, pp. 112 ff.

¹⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 17, p. 112; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 520. The *Hugh Lindsay* was not the first steam vessel to be built and used in Indian waters. That honor appears to belong to the river steamer *Diana*, launched at Calcutta in 1823. The Calcutta *John Bull* is quoted as saying on the completion of the vessel, "We hail her as the harbinger of future vessels of her kind who will waft us to our native shores with speed and pleasure." — Low, *op. cit.*, I, 412 n.; *Asiatic Journal*, VI, N.S., Pt. II, 59.

commanded by the experienced and redoubtable Captain James H. Wilson.¹⁹ The vessel arrived safely at Suez on April 22, having touched at Aden, Jeddah, and Cosseir. In one respect the voyage proved a disappointment. Not only did the Court of Directors fail to despatch a steamer to Alexandria to correlate with the *Hugh Lindsay*, but they even failed to announce the trial voyage. As a result, there were few mails and passengers at Suez with which to return to India, and the effectiveness of the trial trip was seriously compromised.

Nevertheless, the results of the first steam voyage up the Red Sea were significant. They showed that even against head winds a rapid passage could be made to Suez by steam, for of the 33 days spent on the voyage, 12 had been required for coaling. The time actually consumed on the passage out was 21 days, 6 hours. In the second place, it argued that for long voyages, vessels of greater fuel capacity were needed. The *Hugh Lindsay* had begun the voyage carrying a much larger fuel cargo than her builders had intended, and this had been barely sufficient. The weight of the coal sank the vessel so deeply into the water that progress was seriously impeded on the first part of the trip in each direction. A third result was the demonstration that such communication, if continued, would be exceedingly expensive; it amounted almost literally to "burning rupees" for fuel. Yet in one respect, at least, the experiment justified the expectations of the Bombay Government. The mails carried to Suez on this first steam voyage reached England in 59 days, which for the time was an extremely brief voyage, although in the estimation of the East India Company, this fact did not counterbalance the cost of vessel and equipment and the expense of operation.²⁰ Notwithstanding the various difficulties and objections encountered on the first occasion, the Bombay Government undertook other experimental voyages, one later in the same year and others at irregular intervals, until the sending out of other steam vessels from England made a permanent and regular service possible.²¹

¹⁹ Capt. Wilson had already seen long service in Indian waters. Before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1834, he reported that of his 21 years of service, 13 had been spent in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. In taking command of the *Hugh Lindsay*, he gave up a good position in the regular naval service because of his conviction that steam would eventually take the place of sails. Although he remained a leading advocate of the route he thus helped to open up, he received no distinction for his services before his death in 1875. — *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 17, p. 112; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 526-532.

²⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 745-756. The cost of each round trip was estimated at 23,000 rupees, or about £1700.

²¹ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 197; "Steam Navigation Extended and Made Profitable," in the *Oriental Herald*, XXII, 52-61.

Upon his retiring from office late in 1830, Governor Malcolm in his official report to the Company's Directors summed up his efforts in behalf of steam navigation and outlined a steam program for the future. In preparing this prospectus, he was largely assisted by his brother, Sir Charles Malcolm, who, as Superintendent of the Indian Navy, had had immediate charge of the first steam voyages, and by Capt. Wilson, of the *Hugh Lindsay*. The report advocated the establishment under the Bombay Government of four steam vessels for the Indian service, each with about fifteen days' coal capacity, three of which should be kept in constant service on the Indian side of the Isthmus of Suez, leaving the fourth in reserve. This establishment, it was thought, would suffice for a regular monthly communication for nine months of the year, for it was generally believed at this time that the service between Bombay and Suez would have to be suspended for three months during the height of the southwest monsoon. Malcolm believed that while this service would be expensive, the cost could be largely or entirely defrayed by receipts from passengers and letters, which might be carried from Bombay to Suez in an average of 25 days, and to England in about double that time.²² This recommendation is of the more interest because after several years of doubt and hesitation and wastage of money in profitless ventures, this was essentially the plan put into operation by the East India Company.

Thus far, one element of a thorough test of the Suez route had been lacking: no attempt had been made by the home authorities to establish a steam link between Malta and Alexandria, even for experimental purposes. Because of this fact, even after the first two voyages of the *Hugh Lindsay*, the eventual possibilities of the new route, should steam be applied to both sections of the route, were matters of speculation, and opinions varied widely. Years more must have passed without further light being shed on this question but for the fact that the successors of Elphinstone and Malcolm combined in general the hopes of the one and the practical experiments of the other. Thus, regardless of the attitude of the Court of Directors and the Bengal Government, the *Hugh Lindsay* was sent to Suez on further experimental voyages as frequently as the condition of the vessel, fuel supplies, and the seasons would permit.

In 1831, one of the sailing units of the Bombay Marine was sent to Suez bearing a despatch to the Court of Directors. This

²² *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 745; *ibid.*, 1831-1832, No. 734, pp. 223-225.

requested that early in 1832 a steamer be sent from Malta, then the terminus of English steam service in the Mediterranean, to Alexandria to receive the mails and passengers to be conveyed to Egypt by the *Hugh Lindsay* at that time.²³ Assuming that the home authorities would not suffer this voyage to pass unnoticed, announcements were made in all the Indian Presidencies that the *Hugh Lindsay* would leave Bombay for Suez on January 5, 1832.²⁴

The voyage was made according to schedule. Fuelling facilities had been improved for this trip, so that the passage was made in the remarkably brief time of 21 days, 16 hours, against exceedingly heavy winds and seas, making this perhaps the greatest exploit of steam power up to that time. In other respects the voyage was less noteworthy. The *Hugh Lindsay's* passengers, who made their way from Suez to Alexandria in the expectation of finding there a steam vessel to convey them to Europe, were altogether disappointed. No such vessel appeared, nor could the English Consul-General, John Barker, throw any light on the intentions of the Directors. The passengers could only await the departure of some chance sailing vessel which might carry them on to Europe. Only after a month of impatient waiting were travellers and mails enabled to proceed to Malta, whence they found their way to England on a Government steam packet.²⁵

Upon the return of the *Hugh Lindsay* to Bombay empty, the disappointment of that English community was intense. It began to appear that the cause of rapid communication with the home country was about to fail at the moment of partial success. The prevailing sentiment was expressed by the *Bombay Courier*, which said, in referring to the barren results of the first voyages of the *Hugh Lindsay*:

We have looked in vain for a single advertisement, or even paragraph alluding to the subject, in the papers from home, which, if it had appeared, would have had the effect of loading the steamer with packets for India, instead of allowing her to return, as she has, to the surprise and disappointment of everyone, with one or two dozen letters at the utmost.²⁶

²³ *Asiatic Journal*, IX, N.S., Pt. II, 74.

²⁴ The reported discovery of fresh water in the desert between Suez and Cairo about this time gave a decided impulse to the use of the overland route by travellers. See the *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, I, 252-253; *Asiatic Journal*, IV, N.S., Pt. II, 96.

²⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 766.

²⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, IX, N.S., Pt. II, 74.

Obviously little could be accomplished with the means at hand as long as general lack of interest in England and the opposition of the Court of Directors could nullify whatever initiative was shown in India.

When it became known in England, chiefly through exchanges from Indian papers, what unsupported efforts had been made by the Bombay Government for the establishment of a steam route, loud protests were voiced against the non-progressive policy of the Company. By 1832, the whole matter of improved communication with India by means of steam vessels was beginning to recover from the set-back experienced in 1826 at the time of the voyage of the *Enterprize*. As it had been the English mercantile houses which had financed the Cape voyage of that vessel, so now it was the mercantile and financial interests principally which were becoming convinced that there would be advantages in a Suez route. The idea was evolving that mercantile transactions of English firms operating in India would be much facilitated by a rapid despatch of commercial papers, even though the articles of trade themselves might be exchanged as usual in slow sailing vessels around the Cape of Good Hope.

One of the first steps taken by commercial associations in England toward establishing a practical basis for the use of the Suez route lay in petitions to Parliament for the repeal of Act 59 Geo. III, Chapter 3, which prohibited the levying of any postage rates higher than twopence on single letters (of one ounce or less), and on other packages in proportion, to and from the East Indies.²⁷ While the law itself was not repealed in time to aid some private steamship concerns which were interested in establishing lines leading to India, the agitation resulting from the discussion of the Company's policy with regard to communication bore good fruit.²⁸

The Court of Directors of the East India Company thus far were as dilatory in taking up seriously the matter of improved communication with the East as the Company's governments in the Indian Presidencies were active. After the removal of the Company's trade monopoly in India commercial motives were no longer operative in the Company's policy, and only political ones remained.²⁹ For political purposes the Company

²⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 766; *Asiatic Journal*, V, N.S., Pt. II, 87. Apparently this law had been forgotten or had been ignored by some of the India authorities on previous occasions, when they had sanctioned postage rates as high as four shillings an ounce on English mails.

²⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, X, N.S., Pt. II, 87.

²⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 751; *ibid.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 2, p. 11.

did not consider it practicable to spend several hundred thousand pounds in merely speeding up their despatches.³⁰ Even their attitude toward purely private ventures in steam navigation was a curious mixture of hope and fear. If these projects succeeded in establishing lines to India, the Company would inevitably profit from the improved contacts. But the Directors were apparently afraid, at the same time, that if the English public should become interested in the matter, it might result in some way in increased financial burdens on the Company.³¹ It was therefore decided by the Court that the safer policy would be to discourage any and all efforts in the promotion of steam navigation, especially on the European side of the Isthmus of Suez. For this reason, sundry despatches were sent out to the Indian governments soon after 1830 forbidding any more steam voyages to the Red Sea; but as these mandates were despatched around the Cape of Good Hope, they did not reach their destinations in time to prevent some of the further experiments already mentioned.³²

For that matter, the worst fears of the Court were presently realized. An interested English public demanded governmental action. Even by 1832 the Government was beginning to evince signs of interest in the matter of access to the East. The late political upheavals in Algeria and European Turkey had considerable influence. After 1830 there were persistent rumors and evidences of French political activities in Egypt. Besides this, indications were not wanting that the differences between the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, and his imperial master, the Sultan, which produced a grave crisis in Syria in 1831 and the years following, were prompted by Russia in accordance with her secret schemes of aggrandizement.³³ These developments tended to focus attention on the condition of the East India Company, which led to no few changes in the Company's methods.

In January, 1832, the House of Commons ordered the appointment of a Select Committee, to investigate "the present State of the Affairs of the East India Company, and to inquire into the State of Trade between Great Britain, the East Indies, and

³⁰ It was estimated in 1832 that to establish a bi-monthly communication between Bombay and Suez would cost the East India Company about £100,000 per year.

³¹ Partly to discover whether there were hope of profit, and partly to neutralize hostile criticism, the Company did at intervals send out questionnaires to its functionaries for information as to costs and possible returns from steam enterprises. The operating expenses of the *Hugh Lindsay* on the second and third voyages to Suez, however, were twice the original estimate, and the Court were aghast at the probable expense of a regular and more extensive service. — *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, pp. 752-759.

³² *Ibid.*, 1834, No. 478, pp. 10, 11.

³³ *Oriental Herald*, XIX, 256-257.

China.”⁸⁴ Charles Grant, the President of the India Board, was appointed Chairman of a large Committee of seventy-one members to carry out this commission.⁸⁵ The work of the Committee embraced a great variety of matters connected with trade, finance, and administration. As one feature of these investigations, the India Board sent out questionnaires to various officials connected with the Company’s administration asking for information on “Steam Navigation between India and Egypt, and between different parts of Asia.” Considerable evidence was thus collected relating to the work of steam committees in the Presidencies, trial steam voyages up the Red Sea, surveys in Egypt, and preliminary investigations of the Euphrates River as a possible waterway to the East. Most of this data appeared inconclusive to the Committee,⁸⁶ and, as some experiments were still in progress at the time of its report in August, 1832, no recommendations on this head were made to Parliament. The report merely contained the statement that, “Evidence has likewise been received as to the means of extending the trade with Asia, the Navigation by Steam, etc.”⁸⁷

Meanwhile, for other purposes, English steam lines had been established in the Mediterranean. This body of water, of course, lay completely outside of the sphere of the East India Company, and concern for the protection and development of British interests here devolved upon the British Admiralty. Before English steam navigation companies were prepared to undertake the establishment of commercial steam lines in the Mediterranean, the British Government had reached the conclusion that armed steamers must be added to the Royal Navy to keep pace with the progress of continental rivals. As early as 1825 the first vessels were put into commission for this purpose, and the nucleus of a steam fleet was thus created. A few of these vessels, all of which were to a large degree experimental, were stationed with the regular Navy, while others, for moral as well as practical purposes, were placed in regular service on some part of the line between London and the British naval base at Malta.⁸⁸ In 1832 the Admiralty had three armed steam packet vessels in regular service between Gibraltar and Malta. These had replaced five

⁸⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 734, p. [2].

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 735. — I, 263; *ibid.*, — VI; *ibid.*, — II, 752; (Sir) William Foster, “The India Board (1784-1858),” in *Trans. of the Royal Hist. Soc.*, 3d Ser., XI, 61-85.

⁸⁶ See evidence received: *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 119-130.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 734, p. 60.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1837, No. 539, p. 115.

sailing vessels previously used on this section. The line between England and Spanish ports was at that time still being cared for by sailing vessels, of which there were five in service. Plans were being matured, however, for an increase in the number, power, and range of the units of the steam packet service, and all of this was effected before steam lines were in regular use in eastern waters.³⁹

These developments in European waters still left the line between Malta and Alexandria uncared for.⁴⁰ This missing link was one of the greatest problems to be overcome in the inauguration of steam communication between England and India partly because of the intricacies of bureaucratic government in London, where the Court of Directors of the East India Company came into contact with the Admiralty only through the Board of Control, or, for some purposes, the Treasury and the Post Office. Moreover, to complete any of the shorter lines to the East, foreign territory had to be crossed, and in making any such arrangements the services of the Foreign Office had to be enlisted. A mere enumeration of these few of the many difficulties involved will go far toward explaining why progress toward the desired end was so slow.

One of the principal difficulties was the enormous expense involved before any steam line could be put into regular operation. This alone was sufficient to prevent the presidencies from making further strides in this direction because of the hostility of the Court of Directors toward the spending of money on any such doubtful ventures. Furthermore, the two leading Indian Presidencies showed a strong tendency from the first to disagree on the best ways and means of accomplishing an object desired by both, and their lack of coöperation was of no little importance in neutralising the effectiveness both of their own endeavors and those coming from other sources. These and other discouragements did not prevent the springing up of a group of individual promoters, contemporaneously with the first steam surveys, whose efforts, together with those of Indian steam associations, had considerable effect in developing the interest of all classes in England and in India in the possibilities and advantages of new and rapid means of communication.

The promoters on whom the limelight focused were young and enterprising men, largely without capital themselves, but who had confidence that they could form steam navigation companies

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1834, No. 478, p. 25 of Evidence.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 751.

capable of making large profits from government subsidies or monopolistic rates on mails, passengers, and goods to be transported. From the beginning the attitude of the Bombay authorities and leading citizens was against such speculative undertakings, on the ground that they were foredoomed to failure. In Calcutta, on the other hand, they were welcomed as the logical agencies to undertake projects in which there was likelihood of success and substantial earnings. Calcutta, therefore, became the eastern rendezvous of those who aspired to be founders of large and opulent steam corporations employing either the Cape or the Red Sea route to Europe.

One of the earliest of these schemes to reach an advanced stage of development was that of James W. Taylor. His plan, as outlined in a prospectus issued in 1829, was —

No less than to ply between London and Alexandria, touching at Gibraltar and Malta, with four steamers, the least of which, of 550 tons, is to carry from forty to fifty passengers. They are to begin to sail in August [1830] . . . and afterward to follow, the first and fifteenth of every month. On the other side of the Isthmus of Egypt there will be employed six steamers of the same dimensions, to ply between Calcutta and Suez, touching at Madras and Bombay. . . . Passengers are to be booked through . . . and to be furnished with the necessary accommodations and subsistence in their journeys across the desert between Alexandria and Suez. There are already prepared the necessary steamers . . . twelve in all, two being to replace such as may become disabled by accidents. The British Government in India agrees to come to the aid of the Company with certain facilities for the first two years.⁴¹

The plan as advertised pointed out that the promoters asked no cash subscriptions from the public, but only a subsidy for two years after their vessels should begin operating. At the expiration of this period they would give up subsidies and expect to combine on the basis of profits from government contracts and public patronage at specified rates and schedules.⁴²

The Calcutta and Madras Presidencies gave the project some support, although they would have preferred a line around the continent of Africa. The adherence of Bombay was considered essential to the plan by its promoters, and, having completed his

⁴¹ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 86; Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 129-130.

⁴² *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735.—II, App. 25, pp. 727-730; *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 55.

organization in England, Taylor left London in October, 1829, to carry his project to Bombay in person. His departure at that moment was due to his desire to anticipate Thomas Waghorn, who was preparing to attempt a trip to India by way of Egypt in record time. Taylor's passage was replete with incidents and thrills. Leaving London on October 21, he made his way to Suez *via* Calais, Marseilles, and Malta, arriving in Alexandria after a fortunate voyage on November 8. He proceeded presently to Suez, where he arrived after a trip of 27 days net from London — a real feat for that period. From Suez Taylor reached Bombay on the same sailing vessel which bore his rival, Waghorn.

At Bombay Taylor encountered numerous difficulties. Governor Malcolm was at that time engaged in plans for the opening of a steam line to Suez under Government auspices, employing one steam vessel, the *Hugh Lindsay*, and other units of the Bombay Marine for the purpose. In consequence, he was not inclined to give countenance to the new scheme.⁴³ Taylor strongly sued for favor and some temporary support in the form of a subsidy, offering to modify his original terms by granting the Company the use of his vessels in time of war. He even adroitly suggested that the proposed steam line be called the "Malcolm Line of Steam Packets."⁴⁴ However, the Governor and his Council remained incredulous that Taylor could redeem his extensive pledges, while they were certain of the "almost incalculable advantages" which would result from a line of government owned and operated steamers.⁴⁵

Taylor was not yet at the end of his resources. Finding the Suez route practically closed to him, he turned to a possible alternative passage. The Persian Gulf and Tigris-Euphrates route was without European competitors, and had not been surveyed as a highway between East and West. In once more returning to England, then, further to consult the Court of Directors on his steam plans, he decided to proceed through Mesopotamia, which had been suggested as a possible link in a new route to India. He also welcomed the occasion to proceed up the Tigris River to Bagdad, in order to visit his brother, the British Consul, who was strongly imbued with the idea that the ultimate line of communication between England and India would lie through Mesopotamia — an idea never wholly discarded since.

Taylor left Bombay May 2, 1830, with a packet of despatches,

⁴³ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 86, 729; *ibid.*, IV, N.S., Pt. II, 132; *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, pp. 732, 734.

⁴⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, *ut supra*, pp. 732-735.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 727.

in company with a small party of Englishmen who were attracted by the prospect of blazing a new and important trail through western Asia. Arriving at Basrah, the group proceeded up the Tigris to Bagdad, where they were detained several weeks by outbreaks of plague and by Arab disorders in the region to be traversed.⁴⁶ In September the party undertook a survey of the middle reaches of the Euphrates River for steam purposes. Later at Mosul, Taylor secured commercial concessions from the Pasha of Bagdad, including "the exclusive navigation of the Tigris for steam-vessels for a period of ten years," and the monopoly of supply of certain articles, mainly war equipment, to the Pasha himself. At this time, Taylor was enthusiastic over the possibilities of the route, which, he said, was "in every respect preferable to that of the Red Sea."⁴⁷

His enthusiasm, however, proved to be premature. Leaving Mosul, Taylor and his party were attacked by a large force of Arabs intent on plundering. Instead of tamely submitting, the Englishmen stoutly defended themselves. In the ensuing *mêlée*, Taylor and two of his associates were killed, the remaining three barely escaping with their lives by abandoning all their goods and luggage. "Thus untimely fell the first projectors of the Euphrates Valley route of steam communication with the east."⁴⁸ With Taylor perished his elaborate plan of steam transit, and the Bombay Government continued its preparations to work the Suez route alone.

After the death of Taylor, Thomas Waghorn was the most conspicuous of those who hoped to accomplish the herculean task of building up steam navigation lines by their individual efforts.⁴⁹ Waghorn already suspected that the development of a steam line by way of the Cape of Good Hope was a forlorn hope.⁵⁰ For this reason, in returning to India to discover why no funds had reached him from Calcutta and other eastern communities for the construction or purchase of a steam vessel, he deemed it wise to adopt the Red Sea route, both because it promised a quicker pas-

⁴⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 143.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, V, N.S., Pt. II, 46. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, N.S., Pt. II, 130. His brother, Major Robert Taylor, was largely instrumental in arranging for these concessions.

⁴⁸ Low, *op. cit.*, I, 524; *Asiatic Journal*, V, N.S., Pt. II, 46.

⁴⁹ Late in 1834 an Indian naval officer, Capt. Adam Young, asked that the remainder of the Bengal Steam Fund be voted to him for experimental purposes. The Committee decided to pay it over only when a steam vessel had arrived at Calcutta from England in 75 days or less. Nothing further is heard of Young's project. — *Calcutta Courier*, 17 Dec., 1834, quoted in *Asiatic Journal*, XVII, N.S., Pt. II, 93.

⁵⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 183-184, 198; *ibid.*, IV, N.S., Pt. II, 23-24.

sage and because he might choose to identify himself with its development. The announcement by the Bombay Government that the *Enterprize* was about to be sent on a trial voyage to Suez in November, 1829, suggested that a test be made of the possible speed of transmitting despatches by this route to India, even though the home authorities decided against sending a steamer from Malta to Alexandria to facilitate the test.⁶¹ For the purpose of making the desired test, a courier's passports were necessary; but the Court of Directors, to whom Waghorn applied for the papers, did not care to encourage what they termed a "wild goose chase." It was only after repeated applications, and as a means of getting rid of his importunities, that the desired passports and special despatches were prepared. Waghorn then planned his departure so as to reach Suez about the time that the *Enterprize* was scheduled to arrive. He hoped at the same time to overtake his rival and personal enemy, Taylor, who had already set out for Egypt on his way to India. Leaving London on October 28, he proceeded *via* Dover, Boulogne, Paris, Milan, and Trieste, thence by sail to Alexandria, and, continuing at once, arrived at Suez on December 8. The first portion of the whole distance, estimated at 2762 miles, had thus been traversed in 40½ travelling days, which was not a bad showing.

The *Enterprize* had not yet arrived from India, and no word had reached Egypt concerning her. Waghorn found it impossible long to restrain his impatience. Unwilling to return even to Cairo, and finding Suez an exceedingly uncomfortable berth, he undertook a foolhardy exploit in trying to defeat Taylor which subsequently gained for him more renown than many more worthy efforts. Obtaining a small, open boat at Suez, he sailed out alone into the Red Sea, and by keeping to the centre of that body of water hoped to fall in with the *Enterprize*. After continuing on his course for several days and nights, he reached Jeddah, some 660 miles from Suez. Here he learned that an accident to the *Enterprize* had prevented her leaving India at all. Waghorn thereupon chartered a native sailing vessel intending to sail the entire distance to India. A short time after leaving port, however, his native crew became extortionate and mutinous, and for safety's sake he had to remain constantly fully armed and on guard.⁶² Under these circumstances, he was very happy to fall in with the

⁶¹ *Bombay Courier*, quoted in the *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, O.S., 103, 306, 622, 759; *ibid.*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 13-15. It was rumored that the Court of Directors at first undertook to charter a privately-owned steamer for a Mediterranean voyage, offering the proprietors £1000 for the trip; but when the latter demanded £1500, the Court threw over the whole matter. — Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 128.

⁶² *Annual Register*, XCII, Pt. II, 198-199.

Thetis, a brig-of-war of the Bombay Marine, which had been sent to the Red Sea on the double mission of establishing a depot of coal for the *Enterprize* and undertaking a survey of the Red Sea as a prelude to the opening of regular steam lines. The *Thetis* had already established a coaling base at Suez, and was on the point of sailing for Bombay when intercepted. Waghorn gladly embraced the opportunity to discharge his native boat and continue in the *Thetis*. This arrangement had one great disadvantage, however, for on board was his rival, Taylor, who had sailed in the *Thetis* from Suez on the day following Waghorn's arrival at that port. What passed between the two men during this long voyage, we do not know; but it is interesting in this connection to note that soon after Bombay was reached on March twenty-first, 1830, Taylor began considering a line of communication through Mesopotamia and Syria to the Mediterranean as possibly more practicable than one through the Red Sea.⁵³

In August, 1830, Waghorn was given his last opportunity as the projector of an independent steam corporation by the Calcutta Steam Committee. It was voted to devote the whole of the steam fund remaining after outstanding expenses had been paid toward the realization of the steam line advocated by Waghorn. The money was to be placed with an English financial house as agent, "to see it applied strictly to the purposes of aiding in the construction of a steam vessel . . . Mr. Waghorn giving personal security to refund one-half the amount should he fail to make the voyage out in seventy-five days."⁵⁴ Waghorn presently returned to England, but owing either to his inability to give the required security or to interest English investors in his scheme, it passed into the limbo of abandoned hopes. His zeal, however, was not without accomplishment. Once the matter of steam transit was taken up in earnest by the minions of government he was found to be quite useful as a sort of official errand

⁵³ Low, *op. cit.*, I, 522-524; *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. I, 195-196; Pt. II, 15.

⁵⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, IV, N.S., Pt. II, 12. Waghorn constantly complained that his efforts in behalf of steam communication were entirely at his own expense from the first. This is one of the factors which has caused him to be eulogised by his biographers. Probably his personal disbursements were large, but in June, 1830, the Bombay Government paid his expense account up to that time, amounting to £320 1s., and these or other expenses were paid by the Calcutta Steam Committee later. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 12, 48; *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, p. 736. Other funds with which he was entrusted at times were apparently misused. His propensity for exaggerated statements is illustrated by his testimony before a Select Committee in 1834, when he boastfully spoke of having been at the Island of Socotra "dozens of times," which he presently admitted to mean "three or four times," and there is some doubt as to the correctness of his revised statement. Cf. *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Evidence, pp. 208-232; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. I, 249.

boy.⁵⁵ His later work in Egypt as a transportation agent went far toward alleviating the discomforts of travel through Egypt.

Between March, 1830, and May, 1833, the *Hugh Lindsay* made four voyages to the Red Sea, each of which clearly demonstrated the utility of that line.⁵⁶ These long and difficult voyages also went far toward pulling the little cruiser to pieces. In view of this and the disinclination of the Court of Directors to take any steps toward replacing the vessel, a meeting was held in Bombay on May 14, 1833, of those interested in the cause of steam navigation between England and India. The immediate object was to make arrangements for the development of the line from Bombay to Suez, "it being concluded that the enterprize of private individuals . . . would accomplish the remaining distance."⁵⁷ This object was to be accomplished by the raising of a "Steam Fund," to be administered by a "Steam Committee," as at Calcutta. The Bombay Steam Fund differed from its prototype, however, in being a kind of joint-stock enterprise: subscribers of 100 rupees or more were to benefit *pro rata* from any profits which might at any time accrue from the successful establishment of a steam line. The plans of the Bombay Steam Committee called for the construction of a new steam vessel in England, to be owned and operated by the Steam Society, and to replace or supplement the *Hugh Lindsay*.

At the same time, a new movement was being started in Calcutta. It had there become apparent that individual enterprise could not succeed for the time being because of the refusal of the Court of Directors to grant subsidies to such projects. As this destroyed the hope of any immediate development of the Cape route with steam vessels, public interest in Calcutta turned toward the Red Sea route which had already been partly tested and found practicable. With the approval of a majority of the subscribers to the first Bengal Steam Fund, a public "steam meeting" was held at the Calcutta Town Hall on June 14, 1833, to consider ways and means of action. It was voted first to send a petition to the Court of Directors for a permanent steam establishment which would serve Calcutta. Since a favorable reply to this was a matter of doubt, the meeting voted further to raise a new steam fund which would not be circumscribed by the conditions under which the old had been formed, and which instead might be

⁵⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, p. 736.

⁵⁶ J. H. Wilson, *On Steam Communication between Bombay and Suez, with an Account of the Hugh Lindsay's Four Voyages* (Bombay, 1833); *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 2, p. 10; App. 17, pp. 112-113.

⁵⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, XII, N.S., Pt. II, 97.

applied to any kind of project that promised early results. A new steam committee was therefore formed and a new general subscription begun, but with the express provision that funds so raised should never be joined with the Bombay joint-stock fund.

The new plan at Calcutta started well. Within a few weeks subscriptions totalled over 50,000 rupees, and plans were being discussed for making the fund effective. This substantial response to the new appeal for funds was very heartening. It was at once an indication of the importance attached by the Calcutta community to improved communications and an index to the rapidly growing wealth of the Presidency despite the deplorable financial condition of the East India Company.⁵⁸

The first scheme evolved by the new Calcutta Steam Committee was to secure a loan of the *Hugh Lindsay* and the existing coal depots on the route to Suez from the Indian Government, all operating expenses for a year to be borne by the new steam fund. The Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, who was very anxious that a steam line be established, made the counter proposition that the *Hugh Lindsay* be sent on four voyages to Suez at Government expense, the Bombay and Calcutta Steam Committees jointly supplying the fuel for the quarterly voyages.⁵⁹ The Bombay Steam Committee expressed considerable dislike of this plan, and especially the idea of working in conjunction with the Calcutta group. They agreed to accept the arrangement, however, on condition that the new Bengal steam fund be placed at their disposal, so that in case the plan fell through, due to non-support by the Court of Directors after the coal depots were in place, they could still use the amount of their own joint-stock fund for the purchase of a new steamer, as originally intended.⁶⁰ This suggestion was indignantly rejected by the Calcutta Committee, with the entire approval of the Governor-General.

Lord William Bentinck publicly expressed keen disappointment at the attitude taken by Bombay, and made a new suggestion that a steamer be purchased or leased by the Supreme Government of India and operated direct from Calcutta to Suez by the Bengal Committee. This plan was based on the recent appearance in the Hooghly River of a new steamer, the *Forbes*, which although constructed for river service, was considered of sufficient size and

⁵⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, p. 225 f.; XIII, N.S., Pt. II, 28, 95, 195. Steam funds similar to that in Calcutta were formed at Colombo (Ceylon), Agra, Delhi, and Madras, though in some places two funds were started, one for small, non-participating subscriptions, and a joint-stock fund for large investments.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, XIII, N.S., Pt. II, 141-143.

⁶⁰ *Bombay Courier*, 1 and 12 Oct., 1833, as given in the *Asiatic Journal*, XIII, N.S., Pt. II, 168, 194, 257.

power for the trip to Suez. This suggestion was joyfully adopted by the Calcutta Steam Committee, the joy being all the greater because Bombay had no part in the arrangement. The *Forbes* was consequently chartered from the owners for a maximum of three voyages to Suez at the rate of 4000 rupees per month, the expense to be borne by the Bengal Government. The Steam Committee assumed the cost of the necessary fuel depots, having already raised about 1,30,000 rupees for the steam fund.⁶¹

The announcement that Calcutta was to have an independent line to Suez caused grave concern in Bombay. The Bombay Steam Committee at once adopted a most conciliatory tone, offering to coöperate "as far as possible" in carrying out the original proposal. They refused to give up their joint-stock idea, however, so it was finally agreed that the *Hugh Lindsay* was to make one trip from Bombay at the expense of the Government of India early in 1834, after which the *Forbes* was to be run for three voyages from Calcutta, thus working out the elements of a comprehensive scheme of steam navigation to all of the Indian Presidencies.

Throughout the year 1833 preparations went on apace for the four projected voyages of the next year. A petition was sent to the British Government, asking for steamers to coöperate in the Mediterranean. Coaling vessels were sent out to establish depots in the Maldives, at Socotra, and on the Arabian coast. The Mohammedan King of the Maldives, sensing the loss of his independence, protested that no good harbors or coaling places existed in his islands, and that his subjects were bad people who might harm the English. But his objections were answered by the Calcutta Steam Committee with a present of a silver watch, some silk and muslin cloth, and *six prints of the Forbes steamer!*⁶² The native ruler of Socotra proved to be more refractory still. Refusing to sell his island at the price fixed by the Bengal Government, it was occupied in force until it was found to be of no considerable value as a way station.⁶³

The *Hugh Lindsay* reached Suez in February, 1834, as per schedule, carrying a number of passengers, each of whom had paid about 1200 rupees (£300) for his passage.⁶⁴ The *Forbes*

⁶¹ *India Gazette*, 5 Nov., 1833; *Calcutta Courier*, 23 Nov., 1833; *Asiatic Journal*, XIII, N.S., Pt. II, 194-195, 246; *ibid.*, XIV, N.S., Pt. II, 6, 116-117.

⁶² *Asiatic Journal*, XVI, N.S., Pt. II, 227.

⁶³ *Bengal Hurkaru*, 20 Nov., 1834, quoted in *Asiatic Journal*, XVI, N.S., Pt. II, 251. Cf. *ibid.*, XIV, N.S., Pt. II, 95.

⁶⁴ An excellent account of the voyage is given in the *Asiatic Journal*, XIV, N.S., Pt. I, 198-202. An overland trip at this time was no simple matter. Besides costing heavily in passage money, the passenger had to carry all his accommodations with

also left Calcutta on the prearranged date, April 15, each passenger for Suez having paid 100 rupees passage money. Just as the vessel reached Madras, however, its boiler was badly damaged, and the vessel was obliged to return to Calcutta under canvas for repairs.⁶⁶ This upset the whole Calcutta plan for the time being, and more than a lac of rupees had been spent without result. The *Hugh Lindsay* was therefore continued in service as frequently as her mechanical condition would permit, while the *Forbes* was being prepared for a second attempt.

This took place in September, at the end of the southwest monsoon. The trip was fairly successful, on the whole, Suez being reached after a voyage of 69 days, and mails were sent overland to England, though they had to be conveyed to Malta in a sailing vessel. The return of the *Forbes* led to a momentary wave of enthusiasm at Calcutta, and the Steam Committee resolved to send out the steamer for a third time in 1835. The Bengal Government did not approve of this, however, and after a brief day in the limelight, the little *Forbes* returned to the work for which she had been constructed, that of towing sailing vessels up and down the Hooghly River.⁶⁶ For the time being, the remainder of the Calcutta steam fund was employed in subsidizing a campaign of propaganda in England and in facilitating the transit of mails and passengers through Egypt.

The Bombay Steam Committee meanwhile had done little. The joint-stock subscriptions were not sufficient for the purchase of a new and adequate steamer, and, besides, the *Hugh Lindsay* continued to be operated at intervals at Government expense.⁶⁷ At the same time, the tremendous cost at which the *Forbes* had made a single voyage to Suez and the cost of keeping the *Hugh Lindsay* in repair and her furnaces supplied with fuel more and more emphasized the fact that the task of establishing adequate

him. The list of necessities in 1834, as compiled by an experienced traveller, included the following, principally for the passage through Egypt: 450 Spanish dollars, 1 interpreter-servant, several weeks' supply of tea, coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, mustard, etc., 2 dozen bottles each of sherry, brandy, and water, separately packed, 2 kegs of water for cooking, 2 dozen canisters of *bouillé*, a good supply of candles, powder and shot, 1 canteen, 1 camp table, a camp chair, cooking utensils, lantern or cabin lamp, rope, nails, hammer, gimlet, twine, needles, basin, flint and steel, pistol, umbrella, towels, soap, bedding, camp bed with posts and curtains, bread, butter, eggs, charcoal, firewood, tent, and a milch goat, with a cradle so that it could be carried on a camel. See W. H. Bartlett, *The Nile Boat; or, Glimpses of the Land of Egypt* (2d ed., London, 1850), pp. 30-31.

⁶⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, XV, N.S., Pt. II, 105, 144, 190-191.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, XVII, N.S., Pt. II, 224; *Calcutta Courier*, 28 March, 1835, quoted in *ibid.*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 13-14.

⁶⁷ What remained of the Bombay Steam Fund, after various minor disbursements had been made, was later divided among the subscribers.

steam lines in the eastern seas was too great for steam committees, even with government support. If lines of rapid transit were to be developed beyond the Mediterranean, the initiative must obviously come from still higher sources of authority.

Although a kind of *impasse* seemed to have been reached by the end of 1834, the steam organizations in the Indian Presidencies were not idle during the next few years. They showered petitions upon the Court of Directors, the House of Commons, and several of the departments of the British Government. Still acting independently, they employed "steam agents" in London, whose business it was to carry on lobbying activities, to publish pamphlets and prospectuses, and generally to keep the subject of steam navigation to India before the public eye.

At home, interest in the Suez route had not been altogether wanting. The voyages of the *Hugh Lindsay* brough distinguished travellers, despatches, and mails from India in record time and caused favorable comment in many circles. The sentiment of mercantile interests was increasingly enlisted. The subject of eastern steam lines soon came up for discussion both at the East India House and in the House of Commons. The question of assuming further expense for the development of the Suez route was hotly debated at proprietary meetings of the East India Company. In all of these discussions it was asserted that any further expense incurred for steam communication must inevitably increase the already heavy burdens on the peoples of India. But it was also argued that by this same speedy communication, many problems of administration would be lightened, and the Indian peoples benefited accordingly.⁶⁸

Debates in the House of Commons in 1834 led to the decision to give the Euphrates River project a thorough trial before embarking extensively on any official program for the development of the Red Sea route. Nevertheless, while voting a substantial sum for the steam survey of the Euphrates, the House had before them the recommendation of the Select Committee appointed to consider the matter, that "it is expedient that measures should be immediately taken for the regular establishment of steam communication from India by the Red Sea."⁶⁹

One of the principal difficulties in the way of an adequate line of steamships in the Indian Ocean was the dilapidated financial condition of the East India Company. This corporation was barely solvent in 1835, and had practically become a ward of the

⁶⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XV, N.S., Pt. II, 119.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, XVII, N.S., Pt. II, 276.

British Government. Partly for this reason, the time was already passing when the Company's monopoly was looked upon as prohibiting any interference in its domains beyond the Mediterranean. Sir John Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control, in speaking before the House of Commons on August 9, 1835, made the significant remark, that "The object [steam navigation to India] was one of national importance. . . As to the route by the Euphrates, what might be the issue, he could not say. . . But, supposing the Expedition to succeed, it would still be the duty of the King's Government to take steps for the navigation of the Red Sea."⁷⁰

With this assumption of moral responsibility by the British Government, preliminary arrangements went forward for a tentative establishment of the Red Sea route. The extension of the French steam packet service, which included several fast and comfortable vessels, from Marseilles to Alexandria in 1835 insured a rapid and dependable service in the Mediterranean independently of the British Admiralty packets.⁷¹ Pressure applied by the Board of Control caused the Directors of the East India Company to order the construction of two large steam vessels for regular service between Bombay and Suez, to supplement the *Hugh Lindsay*.⁷² But final arrangements for the development of this route had to await the outcome of a steam expedition designed to test the practicability of steam navigation on the rivers of Mesopotamia. After 1835, however, regardless of the findings of the Euphrates Expedition, there was little doubt that vessels flying the British flag would soon come regularly and at constantly lessening intervals to either side of the Isthmus of Suez. Already considerable progress had been made. On speed tests, messages had been carried between London and Bombay in as short a time as 52 days, and mails could be transported overland between Bombay and Calcutta by post or "dawk" in about ten days more.⁷³

For these early accomplishments the steam associations in the Indian Presidencies may claim a large measure of credit despite their quarrels. In the words of a contemporary French traveller, "It was neither to aid the ambitious schemes of Lord Palmerston, nor to furnish a theme for the harangues of Sir John Hobhouse,

⁷⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 38.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, XVI, N.S., Pt. II, 148. French packets were generally reputed to be faster than British steamers at this time, and in 1835 they sailed for the Levant *via* Nice, Genoa, Livorno, Civita Vecchia, Naples, Malta, and Navarino every ten or twelve days.

⁷² *London Times*, 18 Aug., 2 Oct., 1835; *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 38; Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 132.

⁷³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., p. 76; *Asiatic Journal*, XIV, N.S., Pt. I, 198 ff.; *ibid.*, XVII, N.S., Pt. II, 22, 276.

that the inhabitants of India had, with admirable zeal and generosity, established regular communication *via* Suez. . . Their motives were most praiseworthy: one element desired rapid commercial operations; others wanted a means of avoiding long trips; all wanted quick news. . . And success was desirable to aliens as well as to the English.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ V. Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, II, 177-178.

CHAPTER VI

THE SHAPING OF A BRITISH EASTERN POLICY

THE NAPOLEONIC wars became national wars after 1808, encircled France, and at last overwhelmed the dictator of Europe. In 1814 the allied Powers required the restored Bourbon monarchy in the first Treaty of Paris to give up all thought of continuing Napoleon's oriental policy.¹ At Vienna in 1815 the same Powers, in rearranging the map of Europe, were still apparently in accord on eastern questions. The Quadruple Alliance of September, 1815, brought into close association those states which were potential competitors in the Near and Middle East. Thus, with the principal European aggressor crushed, Great Britain might well consider India reasonably secure.²

Unfortunately, this was a false sense of security. First, the Concert of Europe, which was to have proved an antidote for war, soon became hopelessly disrupted over intervention in Spain and in the Spanish colonies. Shortly afterward, the outbreak of hostilities in the Greek Peninsula, where a war of liberation from Turkish despotism was undertaken, raised a number of new and grave issues in which all the great Powers became involved. Before the problems arising here had been solved, a Russian attack on Turkey, the conquest of Algeria by an unchastened France, and the peculiar relation of a new French dynasty to the Belgian Revolution appeared for a time to foreshadow a new European conflict.³ Within a dozen years the Concert of Europe was little more than a name.

Of these developments, the most disturbing from the point of view of routes of access to the East, arose from the Greek war of independence. The Greeks, who had been undergoing a re-

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, I, 151-170. See Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, II, 419-420.

² Édouard Driault, *La Question d'Orient*, pp. 100-101.

³ Cf. Charles White, *Belgium and the Twenty-four Articles* (London, 1834); *Sir Robert Peel from His Private Papers* (2 vols., London, 1899), II, 159-160; Duke of Wellington, *Despatches*, etc., (15 vols., London, 1859), III, 445.

markable commercial revival since the decline of English and French trade in the Levant,⁴ had the popular sympathy of most of the peoples of western Europe in their struggles to free themselves from the worse features of Turkish rule. European governments, however, were for the most part stoutly opposed to the Greek cause, and for several years the Greek question was discussed in the principal chancelleries of Europe without much result other than a general agreement on inaction. Tsar Alexander I, who had kept his huge army on a war footing since the Congress of Vienna, made overtures to France for an alliance in which the two Powers would settle the Eastern Question in their own interests. The French, aware of the sentiments of neighboring states, refused to rise to the bait. Both Austria and England were deeply concerned in preventing further Russian progress toward the Golden Horn,⁵ Austria because of concern in the Balkan Peninsula, Great Britain because of budding interest in the routes to the East.⁶

Until the Eastern Question assumed serious proportions, Great Britain had done little more toward becoming entrenched in the Near and Middle East since the beginning of the century than to continue *rapprochements* with native states in perfunctory fashion. For half a generation previously there had seemed to be no reason for an active eastern program. The Napoleonic wars had left in British hands important strategic positions, particularly Malta and the Ionian Isles, which, with Gibraltar, appeared to secure a passage through the Mediterranean. General European exhaustion following the long wars and lack of motive for the development of new routes to the East made for a policy of *laissez faire* in eastern matters. Besides, the Cape route with the new way station at Table Bay sufficed for English transportation needs.

The Greek Revolution seriously disturbed the calm of the Mediterranean and gave rise to a long period of heated rivalry both within the Mediterranean area and beyond. The principals in the contest which ushered in the insoluble Eastern Question were, besides Britain, France and Russia, whose conflicting interests threatened on many occasions to bring an end to the Turkish Empire but finally resulted in preserving it. The fundamental interests of these three Powers were not essentially different from those of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Russians

⁴ Driault, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁵ Russian spies were believed to be working in considerable numbers in India at this time preparatory to another kind of offensive. — *Asiatic Journal*, XV, O.S., 105, 403-404.

⁶ Driault, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

desired an outlet on the Mediterranean and they coveted the riches of India. The French hoped to dominate the Mediterranean and to secure their own means of access to the East by controlling Egypt and maintaining their traditional interests in Syria. For the British it was necessary to safeguard all the lines leading to India and to make them, if possible, into British routes.

The revival of this eighteenth century struggle grew immediately out of the ravaging of the choicest portions of Greece by the Turks after 1821. Within a few years the populations of these once prosperous regions were decimated and much of the country reduced to a wilderness. Treason and disunity among the Greek revolutionaries contributed to the confusion, which at one time promised to end with the reestablishment of the Turkish yoke on a more intolerable basis than ever. For the more prompt recovery of the revolted area, the Sultan in 1824 requested the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, to assist him, in consideration of a reward consisting of two Turkish pashaliks.⁷ The ambitious Pasha agreed to the terms offered, and sent to Greek waters almost his whole naval force as transports for an Egyptian army. The arrival off the Morea of this powerful armament created a considerable stir among the nations of Europe where the Greek cause was growing in popularity, and public sentiment presently moved governments to action.

The temper of the English nation by 1826 brought the Foreign Minister, George Canning, to sympathize with the Greek cause and to favor intervention, in spite of the warnings of imperialists and the doubts of his colleagues. Simultaneously, in France a wave of popular sympathy prompted the Bourbon monarchy, which already favored action on other grounds, to intervene, while Russia had already determined to make capital of the situation, disregarding the cold disapproval of Austria. "The course to which personal inclination would never have led the Tsar," says the leading historian of these events, "was being gradually forced on him by the logic of political necessity; for, apart from the military reasons . . . the growing influence of England in the Levant was beginning to fill him with anxiety. Russia could not afford to see her own prestige completely overshadowed by that of a power which was already recognized as her great rival in the East."⁸

On April 4, 1826, a Protocol was drawn up at St. Petersburg, with English approval, providing that the Turkish Government

⁷ Driault, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁸ W. Alison Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence, 1821-1833* (New York, 1897), pp. 244-245.

should be made partially to withdraw from Greece.⁹ The Porte flatly refused to accede to this. After some delay, the Protocol, on July 6, 1827, was made into the Treaty of London, by which the contracting parties, Great Britain, France and Russia, bound themselves to secure the autonomy of Greece.¹⁰ The Sultan replied by drafting additional armed forces from Egypt, for which he agreed to pay with additional grants of power to Mehemet Ali. In view of this and in the fear that Russia, acting alone, might advance too far, Great Britain and France despatched a joint fleet to establish a blockade of the Morea, where the recently arrived Egyptian fleet was preparing to coöperate with Turkish forces. On August 8 Canning died, but the change in British policy which this event foretold by bringing into power Lord Goderich and presently the Duke of Wellington, came too late to prevent the English nation being seriously compromised in its eastern relations.

Sir Stratford Canning, British Ambassador at the Porte, meanwhile instructed Lord Codrington, in command of the allied naval forces, regarding the attitude he was to take toward Turkish and Egyptian naval units. "You are," he said, "to interpose your forces between them [the French and Russians on the one side, and the Ottoman forces on the other], and to keep peace with your speaking trumpet, if possible; but, in case of necessity, with that which is used for the maintenance of a blockade against friends as well as foes; I mean *force*."¹¹ Admiral Codrington either did not wish to keep the peace, or was unable to do so. On October 20, when the two groups of fleets were anchored opposite each other in Navarino Bay, a few obscure shots embroiled them all. Within a few hours the Egyptian and Turkish naval forces had been entirely destroyed.¹²

The reports of this one-sided action were received at the various European capitals with widely differing manifestations of sentiment. The news was received at St. Petersburg with open rejoicing. The Tsar's Court believed that at last, having effected an open rupture between the English and Turkish Governments, the greatest obstacle to their own progress toward Constantinople and the Mediterranean had been removed. The Austrian Court confessed to a feeling of chagrin and deep foreboding. At Paris

⁹ Sir Edward Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty* (4 vols., London, 1875-1891), I, 741-743.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 769-774; Driault, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 ff.; Feodor Martens, *Recueil des Traités et Conventions conclu par la Russie avec les Puissances Étrangères* (15 tom., St. Petersburg, 1874-1909), VII, Pt. I, 283-291. The Treaty of Akkerman, meanwhile forced upon the Turks by Russia, practically made the Black Sea a Russian lake.

¹¹ Quoted in William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, VI, 360.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 361-372.

both government and populace learned with glee of the destruction of the Mohammedan fleets. The one saw the decline of British influence in the Levant, which had so often obstructed French enterprise; the other rejoiced at the blow given Turkish despotism. At London, however, aside from the glad outbursts of sentimentalists, the victory of Navarino produced a feeling quite contrary to what might have been expected. A sense of disaster pervaded official circles. Editors of some of the more conservative journals referred to the naval action as a British rather than a Turkish defeat, and subsequent developments lent color to the assertion. An interesting commentary on the paradoxical diplomacy of Great Britain at this juncture is shown by the official assertion that although a British fleet had taken part in an unprovoked act of war against a friendly Turkish force, British relations with the Porte were not necessarily altered thereby. The British Ambassador, although compelled to leave Constantinople, was not officially recalled, and the British Government continued to maintain that relations with Turkey were on the usual friendly basis.¹³

The important bearing of the Navarino incident on British imperial interests was not readily understood by the English public, which was saturated with blood-curdling stories of Mohammedan atrocities against a defenceless Christian population in Greece. To counteract this feeling and to bring about a governmental policy in accord with national interests, to save, if possible, the carriage and harness after the horse had been stolen, imperialistic publicists departed from the traditional caution of English writers and stated their arguments with utmost candor. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* put the matter succinctly in stating —

Much has been said, and a good deal written, on the possibility of our being called upon to defend our Indian possessions against the invasion of a European power; and there is still much question of the practicability of such an expedition. . .

It is almost unnecessary to say, that Russia is the only European nation at all likely to undertake this enterprise, or, indeed, whose situation puts it in her power to attempt it. She is the only nation who has a frontier in Asia, or who comes in contact with those Asiatic nations, whose remoteness leaves them at the mercy of their neighbours. . . She is the only nation who has the means of establishing any permanent

¹³ Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-272.

influence or control over the countries lying towards India, or extending her frontiers in that direction. Other European governments may form alliances with princes of central Asia, and may even enjoy a certain share of consideration and influence at their courts,¹⁴ but Russia can make her strength be felt and dreaded, and she can threaten with effect, and dictate with the power of enforcing obedience. . .

We know that Russia has been led to speculate on the possibility of attempting the invasion of India *from her present position* — an attempt to carry it by a *coup de main* . . . We know that it has been pronounced practicable by more than one of her military leaders and we have already noticed the opinion of Napoleon in its favor. . .¹⁵

The bearing of the Battle of Navarino on the probable expansion of Russia was delineated by a writer in *Cobbett's Register*, who maintained that —

By this battle we assisted Russia and France to cripple the Turkish power. This was . . . directly contrary to our interest; but we did it because we could not go to war. Russia and France were resolved to sever Greece from the rest of Turkey. . . We knew that they had a design to break up the Turkish power, in order to open a way to India. . .¹⁶

The intervention of the Allies at Navarino accomplished its immediate end. It enabled the Greeks to carry on their desperate, albeit disunited and feeble, struggles for independence. But in the course of the century, far greater consequences to Turkey and the Great Powers resulted. Russia at once proceeded to make the most of the situation created by the London Treaty and the intervention in Greece. The next year she found it possible, by making a favorable treaty with Persia, to go to war against Turkey on her own account. In this move, which was supported by France, Britain could do little more than bite her nails in futile regret and helpless rage.

Turkey proved to be an easy victim at this juncture. Within a year her resistance had been overcome, her armies driven in, and her capital placed at the mercy of the northern invader. Only the fear of provoking a general European war kept the Russians

¹⁴ The reference here to French activities in Persia is unmistakable.

¹⁵ *Blackwood's Magazine*, Sept., 1827, pp. 267-269; David Ross, *Opinions of the European Press on the Eastern Question* (London, 1836), pp. 165-168.

¹⁶ *Cobbett's Register*, Oct., 1829, quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.

from occupying Constantinople. The Tsar's Government was able to bide its time, however, and arrange such a peace with Turkey as might serve Russian purposes on some later occasion. By the Treaty of Adrianople of September 14, 1829, the Sultan consented to the demands previously made by the Allies that the Greeks be freed. This, however, was merely a sop thrown by Russia to the western Powers. Her real purposes were summed up in clauses providing for the permanent weakening of the Ottoman Empire by grants of autonomy to Serbia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, and still more by the transfer to Russia of all claims to Georgia and other Caucasian territories. Moreover, Russia was to be recognized as protector of all Greek Catholic churches within the Empire and was given the right of protection over Russian traders. The situation was full of evil promise.¹⁷ So satisfactory had been the terms of peace that Russia found it possible to acquiesce in the position taken by the western Powers that such territorial changes in Europe were a matter of international concern. Consequently, at a conference in London late in the same year Russia agreed to a slight modification of the terms of the Treaty of Adrianople.¹⁸ But in all essentials the document stood to constitute a notable Russian diplomatic victory.

These events had a tendency to revive the whole question of the likelihood of the invasion of India by a European Power, a question which had been dormant since the close of the Napoleonic wars.¹⁹ Many English imperialists hastened to indulge in a post-mortem examination of the faults of British foreign policy and the evils likely to result from it. The prevailing theme is well illustrated by the comment of a well-known writer in the *Quarterly Review*:

To preserve the independence of Turkey has long been the primary object of the foreign policy of France and England, especially of the latter — for we have an Asiatic as well as a European interest at stake. . .

Is it nothing to see projects maturing for direct communication with India through the Turkish territory, while the Danube is rendered navigable — canals are about to connect that stream with the other rivers of Austria, and with those of Russia, Prussia, and Bavaria, so as to establish

¹⁷ Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, II, 813-831; *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XVI, 647; Barker, *Syria and Egypt under the Last Five Sultans of Turkey*, II, 196, *passim*; Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, p. 144.

¹⁸ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XVI, 647 ff.

¹⁹ *Oriental Herald*, XIX, 269-289; *Quarterly Review*, XLIII, 495, *passim*; Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-388.

a direct communication between the manufacturing districts of Germany and the marts of Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, and even India itself? ²⁰

And an able contemporary added that because of the clever and unscrupulous manner in which Russia set about advancing her interests, the existence of Turkey was undoubtedly necessary to the existence of Persia and the security of India. ²¹

During these eventful years, British foreign policy, if not essentially changing, was at least becoming definitely defined on some points. In 1827 there was much vacillation and doubt as to what should be British attitude toward the Turkish Government. That Power had long been courted because it could give commercial privileges or withhold them at pleasure. Likewise it could grant or refuse rights of passage to India by any of the nearer routes and its fiat was unchallenged. But the battle of Navarino — the most enlightening of a series of significant events — suddenly lifted the veil and disclosed to Great Britain and to the world at large not a powerful Empire, but a weak, disintegrating state, honeycombed with corruption, stricken with poverty, disorganized and disunited, and incapable of any long or consistent course of action. The Ottoman Empire had become little more than a loose confederation, although its traditions still gave its government a prestige quite out of proportion to its real strength.

In the face of this revelation, British attitude had to be revised. The first impulse was to stand aside and to permit the forces of disruption to complete their work. Religious and moral forces in England, active at the time, strongly contributed to this tendency. After the Russo-Turkish War, however, with both Russia and France strong in the eastern Mediterranean, the alternative policy was adopted at London, and the determination to protect and preserve the Turkish state and particularly its capital, Constantinople, became a corner stone of British foreign policy for the next half century. ²²

The most elementary student of modern history knows well that the continued existence of the Turkish Empire up to the end

²⁰ *Quarterly Review*, LIII, 229. For an able summary of the entire situation, see the pamphlet by David Urquhart, published anonymously, entitled, *England, France, Russia and Turkey*. Urquhart was one of the most authoritative and influential writers of the period.

²¹ *British and Foreign Review*, No. 1, quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-383.

²² See Lieut.-Col. Sir George de Lacy Evans, *On the Designs of Russia* (London, 1828), pp. 231-244.

of the Great War was little due to its inherent strength, but was due primarily to the jealousies of the Great Powers, none of whom was willing that another should occupy Constantinople, from which place the Near East could be dominated. It is difficult to divorce the Asiatic aspects of the Eastern Question from the purely European ones. That the former were more potent in the early part of the nineteenth century is indicated by the fact that the British took the lead in promoting the belief that the peace of Europe depended on the continued existence of the relatively innocuous Turkish Empire as a European power.

The contemporary situation in Persia was not calculated to allay any of the fears inspired by events in Europe. The Treaty of Gulistan of 1813²³ produced only a lull in Russian penetration southward toward Mesopotamia and the frontiers of India. Following a disagreement over boundaries, the war broke out again in 1826, and was fought with vigor for two years. The Persians, as on previous occasions, found it impossible to cope successfully with the armies from the north, and by the Treaty of Turkmanshah, in 1828, they lost important territories, including the provinces of Erivan and Nakhchivan. Persia was forced, besides, to grant commercial concessions which went far toward placing her in the relation of vassal to Russia.²⁴ Although the British viewed these developments with deep concern, they were compelled to take the view that the Persians had waged an aggressive war, and that the definitive treaty of 1814 must be modified accordingly to exclude the clause binding Great Britain to assist Persia in any war with Russia.²⁵

We may be assured [said a writer in the *Oriental Herald*], that every circumstance conspires to produce the collision of Great Britain and Russia on the confines of India, and that at no very distant time. Russia, at least, will leave nothing unattempted to accelerate the meeting. . . .²⁶ To attempt to avert the storm by intriguing in the Court of Persia, is merely to prescribe for symptoms, instead of grappling with the disease itself.²⁷

So, with Russia strongly entrenched in northern Persia, and with Russian agents active in Khiva and Bokhara, the situation

²³ Sir Percy Sykes, *History of Persia*, II, 311.

²⁴ Martens et Cussy, *Recueil des Traités et Conventions*, IV, 144-150.

²⁵ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 318-321.

²⁶ That this may not have been far fetched is indicated by an article in the *Gazette de Moscow* for 27 Dec., 1832; quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 353 n.

²⁷ *Oriental Herald*, XIX, 269-282.

in western Asia was threatening enough to call definite attention to such routes as might be developed to help offset these advances. Only secret French agents in India²⁸ and French plans for aggression in Egypt and in Algeria were needed to create as unsatisfactory a picture as the worst British pessimist could desire.²⁹

While events of the greatest significance to British interests were transpiring in the eastern Mediterranean area, another situation arose in the loosely-knit Turkish Empire which tended to focus the attention and concern of Great Britain on the future of the Mediterranean itself. Although Russia had taken the place of France in the center of the Near Eastern stage, the latter was not occupying the rôle of idle spectator. With Britain and Turkey at odds and the Treaty of London still nominally effective, the French Government saw a prospect of regaining in the Mediterranean some of the prestige which had been lost on previous occasions. The Barbary states supplied the most desirable sphere of operations at the time.

France had had commercial relations with northern Africa for decades. Though there had been *malheurs* at times, relations were generally friendly. For this trade and the necessary protection from pirate raids, France had paid an annual tribute to the Moslem chiefs, as did all other nations who wished to be unmolested in their commercial relations.³⁰ Early in the nineteenth century, however, Algerian pirates became unusually active, due to the disorganization of European naval forces during the Napoleonic wars and the suspension of the usual indemnities. Soon after the Congress of Vienna, various Christian Powers sent punitive expeditions against the Barbary pirates, time after time exacting promises of good behavior which were as often violated.³¹ During the twenties, both Great Britain and France blockaded Algerian ports for considerable periods, but without much effect. In view of the accumulation of injuries, the Government of Charles X began contemplating the occupation of Algiers soon after his accession in 1825.³² Only a favorable opportunity was wanting, and it was soon supplied.

²⁸ *Correspondance de Victor Jacquemont avec sa Famille* (2 vols., Paris, 1833). This was translated and published in London the year following in order to disclose French plans for recovering their former power in India. See the *Quarterly Review*, LIII, 19-56.

²⁹ Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

³⁰ Alfred Zimmerman, *Kolonialpolitik* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 318.

³¹ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XI, 185; XII, 994. Cf. *London Gazette*, 13 April, 1824.

³² H. Lorin, *L'Afrique du Nord; Tunisie — Algérie — Maroc* (Paris, 1908), p. 24.

In 1827 a long series of Algerian insults to the French flag culminated in a diplomatic outrage. On a state occasion, the fiery Dey of Algiers, engaged in heated argument, struck the French consul in the face with his glove. Upon the receipt of the report of this challenge in Paris, diplomatic relations were immediately broken off, and notice was issued of a renewed blockade of the port of Algiers.³³ The next three years were spent in deciding whether Algiers might safely and profitably be occupied by France. Many factors contributed to the belief that aggressive action of the sort contemplated was not only desirable, but even necessary. In addition to the more general motives already described, the Bourbon monarchy was faced with serious domestic problems. Opposition to the reactionary régime was becoming constantly more widely spread and threatening, and the only policy which the ministers of Charles X could devise to popularize the monarchy was one of colonial expansion, which might accomplish the victory of nationalism over liberalism. Already the beginnings of a new colonial empire had been made in Senegal.³⁴ In 1829 it was resolved to take a much more pretentious step in Africa.

The French blockade did not prove effective, as had been anticipated, and early in 1830 a fleet was prepared to reduce the Algerian strongholds. These extensive naval preparations gave great umbrage to the British, already supersensitive to anything pertaining to the safety of a Mediterranean waterway. Early in March Lord Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary, wrote the English Ambassador at Paris that —

The formidable force about to be embarked, and the declaration in the speech of His Most Christian Majesty [Charles X] appear to indicate an intention of effecting the entire destruction of the Algerian regency, rather than the infliction of chastisement. This probable change in the condition of a Territory so important from its *geographical position*, cannot be regarded by His Majesty's Government without much interest, and it renders some explanation of the intentions of the French Government still more desirable. . . . The intimate union and concert existing between the two countries give us reason to expect that we shall receive the full confidence of the French Government in a matter touching the interests of both, and which, in its result,

³³ Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, p. 319; *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XIX, 943.

³⁴ Lorin, *op. cit.*, p. 23. The disagreement over Senegal was terminated only in 1904, when other outstanding difficulties were settled.

may be productive of the most important effects upon the commerce and political relations of the Mediterranean States.³⁵

To this Polignac, the chief minister of the Bourbon monarchy, replied that France was obliged to take action to secure reparation for numerous injuries, but that French motives were of the most disinterested kind. The proposed expedition was pictured as a kind of international missionary enterprise, the burden of which France was generously undertaking to bear alone. Furthermore, it was emphasized that, if by any unforeseen developments the existing order in Algiers should be overthrown, the other Christian Powers would be asked to coöperate in determining the new order.³⁶

This statement somewhat relieved the tension, but the protests of disinterestedness did not set British qualms entirely at rest. Aberdeen asked that a formal statement be given in writing that the French Government had no other motives in proceeding to Algeria than those of chastisement and restoration of order, and added, "I will not conceal . . . that the entire silence respecting the rights and interests of the Porte have been observed with some surprise."³⁷ To this Polignac replied evasively and at length, stating that the Porte would be consulted in due time, and that meanwhile the French had no ulterior motives. He also deplored the mistrust shown by England, but the specific guarantees asked for by the British Foreign Office were not given.³⁸

Two months of temporising passed, with relations becoming cool. By this time, the diplomatic basis on which the expedition was to proceed had been determined. Egypt had refused an invitation to coöperate in reducing the Algerian strongholds, the Pasha believing that although the French were his friends, they might one day find it convenient to incorporate Egypt if they once became established in North Africa.³⁹ The Russian Government, also, while making no secret of its approval of French action, took no steps toward participation.⁴⁰ In view of this diplomatic situa-

³⁵ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XIX, 942, Aberdeen, 5 March, 1830.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 943.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 945, Lord Aberdeen, 23 March, 1830.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 947, Lord Stuart de Rothesay, 26 March.

³⁹ Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 117; *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XIX, 953, 956. See W. F. Lord, *England and France in the Mediterranean, 1660-1830* (London, 1901), pp. 88-89, and Louis Blanc, *The History of Ten Years, 1830-1840* (2 vols., London, 1844-1845), I, 75-76, in which it is stated that Mehemet Ali agreed to reduce Algiers himself for a consideration but was restrained by the Porte. The objections of the British Cabinet figured in the failure of Egypt to join the undertaking.

⁴⁰ Blanc, *op. cit.*, I, 75, 76.

tion, the French Government was constrained, on the very eve of the departure of the fleet, to issue a categorical denial of any imperialistic intentions. Upon receipt of this, the British Government feigned a wholly sympathetic attitude.⁴¹

Late in the month of May, the expeditionary squadron sailed from Toulon for Algiers. There the fortifications were bombarded and destroyed with no great difficulty. The disembarkation of troops began on June 14, and by the first week in July the city of Algiers was taken — together with the treasure of the ruling house, some forty million francs. The Dey thereupon capitulated completely, and signed a Convention giving up the control of all fortified coast cities in return for French protection and guarantee of freedom of religion.⁴² By the end of July, 30,000 French soldiers were encamped along the Algerian seaboard.

The British Government hastened to offer congratulations upon the successful outcome of the enterprise and to express the hope that, now that all of the objectives had been attained, evacuation of the province would take place shortly.⁴³ But Polignac, who was largely responsible for the entire proceeding, was an ardent patriot as well as a diplomat. While reassuring the watching Powers, he proceeded to strengthen French establishments in Africa up to the very hour when the political exigencies of the July Revolution drove him and the monarchy he represented from power.⁴⁴

The effect of the July Revolution upon the whole question of the Mediterranean was considerable. Immediately after the accession of Louis Philippe, the Duke of Wellington, then Foreign Minister, instructed Lord Stuart de Rothesay, British Ambassador to France, to inquire of the new king whether it was his intention to observe the engagements contracted by preceding French governments. The new monarch is quoted as having said in reply —

As a general rule, it is my most sincere and firm resolution to maintain inviolable all the treaties which have been concluded the last fifteen years between the powers of Europe and France. As to that which concerns the occupation of Algiers, I have most particular and powerful motives to fulfill the engagements of my family towards Great Britain

⁴¹ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XIX, 947-961.

⁴² *Ibid.*, XVII, 1198; Jean Darcy, *France et Angleterre: Cent Années de Rivalité Coloniale* (Paris, 1904), p. 157, *passim*.

⁴³ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XIX, 961.

⁴⁴ *Edinburgh Review*, LI, 565-566.

. . . You may then, M. the Ambassador, assure your government that mine will conform itself punctually to all the engagements taken by his Majesty Charles X relative to the affairs of Algiers. But I pray you to call the attention of the British Cabinet to the actual state of the public spirit in France, and impress upon it that the evacuation of Algiers would be the signal for the most violent recriminations against my government, which might lead to disastrous results, and that it concerns the peace of Europe not to depopularize a new born power endeavoring to strengthen itself. It is necessary, then, that assured of our intentions, and convinced of our firm will to fulfil the promises of the last government, his Britannic Majesty should leave us the choice of time and means.⁴⁵

The French Revolution of 1830 destroyed the hope of the Bourbon monarchy of using the Algerian expedition as political capital, but it did give the French an opportunity to acquire an important territory almost undisturbed. A general fear among the Great Powers of a repetition of the days following the revolution of 1789, and difficulties arising in Belgium and Poland, temporarily relegated Algeria to the background. The new Orléans Government took advantage of this to embark upon a program of consolidation, pacification, and Gallicization, which laid the basis for a new colonial empire.⁴⁶ In order to make this African *coup* more tolerable to the British, the astute and tactful Marquis de Talleyrand was selected as the new French Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Upon his departure for London, Louis Philippe informed him, "The Algerian affair forms the most delicate part of your mission."⁴⁷ Attempts to smooth over the Algerian affair were furthered by the accession of Lord Palmerston to the British Foreign Office in 1830, but progress toward normal relations was slow because of the aggressive tendencies of French Ministers, Thiers, in particular, and the rise of new issues in the Near East.

The Algerian episode, although not affecting British welfare as much as had been feared, directly contributed to the rise of a

⁴⁵ *Blackwood's Mag.*, XXXVI, 209, quoting M. Sarrons le Jeune, former aide-de-camp to the Marquis de la Fayette. Within three years from the time the first protest was lodged against the Algerian expedition by the British Government, the intention of the French Government to maintain and colonize Algeria had been stated in the Chamber of Deputies.

⁴⁶ Lorin, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁷ Darcy, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

new eastern policy in England — one which savored strongly of imperialism. France had endangered British interests often before. Now at one stroke the French had further despoiled the Ottoman Empire and, by holding extensive territory on both sides of the Mediterranean, were in a fair way to turn it into a "French lake," as the Black Sea had already become a Russian lake. The idea that in this partition of Turkish territories Britain might be compelled to take part out of self-defence could not be entirely discarded as unworthy. It was still contrary to English policy to annex territories where native governments might continue under English influence or protection, but where native princes proved refractory and crises developed, ordinary policy occasionally had to be set aside to secure a suitable *pax Britannica*. In the Mediterranean, British influence in Mohammedan states had temporarily vanished at the time of the unfortunate intervention in Greece. If territorial acquisition became necessary to offset the large gains of Russia and France, there appeared to be the greatest opportunity and advantage in Egypt, whose Pasha was generally considered a French ward and who was often at odds with his imperial master. A writer in the *Oriental Herald* ventured to put the thought into words by saying —

The impression now so generally entertained, of the French having an eye to the possibility that if this event were to take place, a union might be formed between that power and Russia, for the purpose of making an attack on India from two separate points, has induced us to think that a few words on Egypt, as a colony, would not be ill-timed. . .

And he concludes that —

It will be well, if Egypt really is to be possessed by any European power, that England should be the first to plant her standard on the banks of the Nile. . . Of all the acquisitions that England could make, whether in a military, political, commercial, or colonial point of view, Egypt is the most important. Not only is she the key to India, and the immediate connecting point between that country and England, but no territory offers more resources for the augmentation of our wealth. . . So important is the acquisition of Egypt, that when the valour of Nelson, and the blood of Abercrombie, had once made it our own, as soon ought we to have thought of surrendering the Tower of London, as abandoning it.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Oriental Herald*, XIX, 256-257.

That the British Government did seriously contemplate the occupation of Egypt at various times after 1830 cannot be doubted. This was very well appreciated by the Pasha of Egypt himself, who, although he opposed the will of Britain to the point of open conflict on more than one occasion, was careful never to tempt that tolerant Power too far. One of the instances which might have afforded opportunity for intervention in Egypt occurred soon after 1830 while anxiety in England over the Russian conquests of 1828-1829 and the French conquest of Algeria was still at a high pitch. The rise of a situation which both Russia and France considered opportune and in which the Pasha of Egypt played a leading part can best be approached by reviewing the means whereby Mehemet Ali secured the governorship of Egypt and a claim to territories beyond the Isthmus of Suez in Asia.

Mehemet Ali, whose influence on the Levant was probably greater for nearly half a century than that of any contemporary ruler, was born of obscure Albanian parents in 1769. Of his early life, the little which is known comes chiefly from his own accounts. As a young man he engaged in trade as a tobacco merchant, and thus came into contact with those of the outer world who made possible his later career. His education, such as it was, appears to have been gained largely from the gratuitous instruction of a French trader. From this circumstance, Mehemet Ali acquired a respect and an attachment for the French nation which he displayed on many later occasions.⁴⁹

Following the general peace of 1815, he devoted himself to the improvement of the country which he had come to look upon as his own. Soon, also, he showed signs of imperialistic ambitions. Between 1818 and 1820 he brought various parts of Arabia under his influence and protection. In 1822 his aid was asked by the Sultan in the Greek affair, and he gave it on condition that he be made governor of Crete, Syria, and Damascus. The wiping out of the Egyptian fleet at Navarino caused feelings of bitterness, particularly against England, but Mehemet Ali was too shrewd to display them. Upon receiving the announcement of the action at Navarino, he said resignedly, "It was to be!" and assured the representatives of both Britain and France at Cairo that the interests of their respective countries would be well cared for.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Félix Mengin, *Histoire de l'Égypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed-Aly* (2 vols., Paris, 1823), I, 7 ff.; Paul Mouriez, *Histoire de Méhémet-Ali, Vice-roi d'Égypte* (2 vols., Paris, 1858), I, 62-66; A. E. P. B. Weigall, *A History of Events in Egypt from 1798-1914* (New York, 1915), pp. 44-61.

⁵⁰ Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 57-58.

Mehemet Ali appears to have understood far better than most oriental potentates the extent to which the accomplishment of his aims, and even his very existence, depended upon the sufferance of the Powers which dominated the Mediterranean, namely, Britain and France. He also appreciated the extent to which the whole policy of Great Britain in the East related to the protection of India, and while his interests frequently ran at cross purposes to those of the English, he was invariably careful to give no occasion for intervention in Egypt. At such times as he was at odds with Great Britain he was scrupulously careful to protect the lives and property of all Europeans in his domain.

After the partial settlement of the Greek situation, the Pasha, suggesting that he had fulfilled his duty, asked that the promised Syrian pashaliks be given him for his services during the several years previous. The request was ignored by the Porte, inasmuch as no further advantage could be expected from Egyptian forces. This furnished an opportunity for diplomatic action which the French were not slow to seize. From the beginning of his career the French Government had stood sponsor for Mehemet Ali, and on this as on other occasions his interests and those of the French coincided. Encouraged, then, by secret French advice, Mehemet Ali began the preparation of forces to be used in occupying the claimed Syrian territories. His armies were ready in the summer of 1831, and the Rubicon was crossed when Ibrahim Pasha, son of the Viceroy, captured Gaza, the door to Syria and Arabia. Here there was a considerable pause, while the effects of the first move were studied and the army strengthened. Finding that no great alarm had thus far been raised, Mehemet Ali caused the advance to continue. During the summer months of 1833 Jerusalem, Damascus, Acre, and Aleppo were taken. Here the limit of the Pasha's territorial claims should have counselled a halt. But the ease with which one stride after another had been taken, the chaotic state of Turkish defences, and the glee of the French, many of whose officers were serving with the Egyptian forces, for once led his ambition to outstrip his judgment. In August, Egyptian forces crossed from Syria into Asia Minor, in order, as the Pasha said, "to rescue his master from the trammels of Russian influence, and to place about him more worthy counsellors."⁵¹ A few weeks later a large and well equipped Turkish army was defeated and cut to pieces at Konia, and the door to Constantinople appeared to stand open.

At this juncture the whole affair definitely became an international matter. Following the Treaty of Adrianople, Russia as-

⁵¹ *Quarterly Review*, LIII, 250.

sumed the pose of protector of Turkey, thus taking advantage of the disaffection introduced into Anglo-Turkish relations by the Greek revolt. While this was gall and wormwood to British imperialists, there was nothing to be done about it. When Egyptian armies began their triumphant march through Syria in 1833 and a new Egyptian fleet menaced Constantinople, Russia hypocritically offered her military and naval forces for Turkish protection. Although in dire straits, this was at first scornfully refused by the Ottoman Government, which turned to the old ally, England, for assistance. Sir Stratford Canning, recently appointed British Ambassador to the Porte, frantically urged his Government to come to the rescue, but Britain was too seriously affected by the Great Reform wave and by events nearer home in Europe to respond. In despair, therefore, the Turks turned to Russia in the early months of 1833, preferring to risk the Russians in their new rôle of friends than as enemies. The response was instantaneous. Russian diplomats, officers, and engineers swarmed into Constantinople. A Russian fleet entered the Bosphorus. The remaining Turkish forces were reorganized by Russian officers and Russian troops embarked for Asia Minor. Still in doubt as to whether the greater danger threatened from a friendly enemy busily engaged in taking peaceful possession of the entire country, or from the forces of a rebellious vassal who protested his loyalty and asked permission from the Sultan whenever his forces were moved nearer the capital city, the Porte was in deepest despair.

But the peaceful Russian invasion again brought the semblance of unity to the councils of Britain and France. The former now realized that —

The possession of Constantinople [by Russia] would at once establish her supremacy in Central Asia, by the moral influence it would exercise over the whole Mohammedan world. . . . Persia, for the same reason, would cease to be an independent kingdom. Greece, with its islands, would be but a province of Russia. The road to India would be thrown open to her, with all Asia at her back. . . . Even a demonstration against India could augment our national expenditure by many millions annually, and render the government of this country difficult beyond all calculation.⁵²

And in view of the actual occupation of Constantinople by the Russians, the French discovered that they had overplayed their hand. They hastily deserted Mehemet Ali, therefore, in an attempt to counteract the Russian peril. The joint proposals of

⁵² *Ibid.*, LIII, 256.

Great Britain and France were not listened to at first. Only after they had brought much diplomatic pressure to bear was a settlement reached. On April 8, 1833, a Convention was signed, by which it was arranged that Mehemet Ali should retain the pashaliks which had been promised him under the suzerainty of the Sultan. Three months later, on July 8, another Russo-Turkish treaty was signed arranging for compensation to Russia for her "assistance" during the late difficulties. The price of this aid was, to all intents and purposes, Russian control of the Bosphorus.⁵³ Russian designs on Constantinople were rapidly being consummated. The upshot of the affair was to throw Turkey again into the arms of Great Britain. Prussian drill masters replaced Russian officers in the Turkish army. The Russian peril having for the moment been reduced, France returned to her plotting with the Viceroy of Egypt and laid the basis for another Syrian crisis only five years later.⁵⁴

Such, in brief, were the events combining to focus British attention and concern on the Mohammedan countries of the Mediterranean. Thus far, Britain had played largely a defensive rôle in the Near East. This being true, Russia had contrived to penetrate far into Turkey and Persia, approaching not only the natural lines of communication from Europe to India and the East but even the physical frontiers of India itself. France had managed to hold diplomatic sway in Egypt and to extend her control over the Turkish province of Algeria. The great valley of Mesopotamia, though a nominal part of Turkish domain, was still open to European enterprise. At this psychological moment, when the British hold on India seemed to some degree threatened, a new factor entered and presently conspired to aid the British recovery of power in the Mediterranean and beyond. No statesman heralded the advent of this new agent, however, for none recognized its value. No newspaper captions or "leading articles" greeted its début. Widely regarded at first with scorn and incredulity, its real influence and value came to be comprehended only by slow degrees. This new force, whose insidious effect on European diplomacy was destined to be profound, was the steamship.

Some reference has been made to the fact that before the opening of the nineteenth century attempts had been made to develop a British line for communications between the Persian Gulf and

⁵³ The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. — Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, II, 925-928; Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 197.

⁵⁴ Maj. John Hall, *England and the Orleans Monarchy* (London, 1912), pp. 227-230.

the Mediterranean for Indian despatches.⁵⁵ But regular service by this route was discontinued after 1815, and was partially re-established only in 1837 near the end of a steam survey of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.⁵⁶ It was the political situation in the Mediterranean area which, more than anything else, created British interest in the re-opening and the development of this route after 1830. This was not so well known as the route through Egypt and the Red Sea, but its strategic value was considerably greater. The Indian Presidencies, however, were not primarily interested in political routes, but rather in those which would be most reliable and speedy for the exchange of messages and news as well as for the transit of passengers. But their hopes for the development of the Red Sea route had to remain unsatisfied until the possibilities of the development of a practicable route through Mesopotamia had been officially tested, for the Red Sea route lay through Egypt where a Pasha with strong French sympathies held sway. The line through Syria and Mesopotamia came more directly under the control of the Sultan, except where occupied by Egyptian armies, and British reliance was placed on the friendship of the Sultan.

Other factors contributed to focus attention on the line through Syria and Mesopotamia for a system of regular communication. The Red Sea line was handicapped by certain physical limitations which did not hamper the other. For about a third of a year the southwest monsoon dominated the Arabian Sea and was generally considered an insuperable obstacle to steam vessels as it was to sailing ships. The Red Sea was full of dangers to navigation, and both Cairo and Alexandria enjoyed the most unsavory reputations as pest centers. The Persian Gulf, on the other hand, might be approached from Bombay at all seasons of the year, while the lands through which a line would pass in reaching the Mediterranean were believed to be no more detrimental to health than was Egypt. But aside from these considerations, still another element entered into the attempt to utilize the Mesopotamian line.

The ocean steamship did not demonstrate its ultimate value during the first third of the nineteenth century. It was expensive, inefficient, and hazardous. Steam river navigation, on the other hand, was altogether in vogue during this period. Profitable lines multiplied on practically all of the larger rivers and canals of western Europe. It seemed entirely logical, therefore, to suppose

⁵⁵ See above, pp. 59, 67.

⁵⁶ Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, I, 525; Barker, *op. cit.*, I, 55, 96; Chesney, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-331.

that steamers would serve a double purpose on the rivers of Mesopotamia; they would probably reap profits from local river traffic and at the same time would provide a convenient, dependable, and speedy method of transmitting packets between the Persian Gulf and points on the coast of Syria. From here communications with England might be maintained by sea *via* Malta and Gibraltar, or *via* Constantinople and thence by post roads and river steamship lines to the English Channel.⁵⁷ Political advantages and the development of river steam navigation will assist in explaining why, in view of the fact that the Arabian and Red Seas were navigable for a large part of the year, the first serious effort made by the British Government to develop a shorter route to India than that around the Cape of Good Hope was directed to the natural highway through Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Gulf.⁵⁸

Feeling against Russia, which had been steadily rising since the Treaty of London of July 6, 1827, was especially strong in 1829. From having trapped England in connection with the Near Eastern situation, Russia was proceeding to crush Turkey. Every Russian move was viewed with alarm. "They have now steam boats on the Volga and the Caspian Sea," wrote Thomas Love Peacock, Chief Examiner of the India House, in September, 1829. "They will soon have them on the Sea of Aral and the Oxus, and in all probability on the Euphrates and the Tigris. . . They will do everything in Asia that is worth the doing, and that we leave undone."⁵⁹ But some steps were taken to block the Russian advance, and one of the first agents in this move was Capt. Francis Rawdon Chesney, R. A.

During the Russo-Turkish War, British army officers openly sympathized with Turkey, and Chesney, with the knowledge, if not the consent, of his Government, hastened out to Constantinople late in 1828 to enlist with the Turkish forces. Upon his arrival he found that the war had already ended. For some weeks he acted as unofficial observer with the Turkish armies, then returned to Constantinople ready for such tasks of an imperial nature as might present themselves. An attractive enterprise was not wanting. From Sir Robert Gordon, then British Ambas-

⁵⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., pp. 13-54. That this was the day of river transportation is shown by the suggestion that commerce with India might be developed *via* the Rhine, Danube, Orontes, Euphrates, and Indus. Steamers were already plying on the Rhine and Danube, while railways were still rather frowned upon.

⁵⁸ Because this line was estimated to be shorter than that through Egypt and the Red Sea, it later came to be known as the direct route or "short cut."

⁵⁹ *Parl. Pap.* 1834, No. 478, App. 1, p. 10.

sador at the Porte, Chesney received a commission to proceed to Egypt to examine that country with a view to ascertaining what facilities for through communication might be discovered.

Arriving in Alexandria with a Turkish *firman* in May, 1830, Chesney found his task already outlined for him. The India House had just sent out to Consul-General John Barker a considerable list of queries respecting the relative advantages of the Egyptian and Syrian routes for communication between England and India. These were turned over to Chesney, who gladly undertook to make a comparative examination of the two natural passageways. One of his first steps was to investigate the possibility of transforming the overland route through Egypt into a waterway by the construction of a canal across the Isthmus of Suez. In carrying out this part of his commission, he surveyed both the Isthmus and the proposed canal lines leading from the Nile to the Red Sea. His findings as to levels are interesting, for they disproved, to his own satisfaction, at least, the calculations of the engineers of Napoleon, who had reported a difference of nearly thirty-three feet in the levels of the Mediterranean and Red Seas.⁶⁰ This made it appear that the Nile at Cairo was slightly below the mean level of the Red Sea at Suez. Chesney's report, which showed no appreciable difference in the levels of the two seas, apparently was not convincing to the English authorities, for until the time of De Lesseps French estimates were generally accepted as correct, and tentative canal projects by Englishmen were all based on the plan of joining the Red Sea with the Nile in the neighborhood of Cairo.⁶¹

While he was engaged in surveying the Isthmus of Suez and becoming constantly more impressed with the importance of improved communication with India, Chesney seems to have become imbued for the first time with the idea of substituting the Euphrates River for the desert line through Syria and Arabia to the Persian Gulf which had been used at intervals previously. Having reported to Sir Robert Gordon and having received the approval of Consul-General Barker on his work in Egypt, Chesney received permission to make a preliminary survey of the Euphrates River primarily to discover its navigability, about which almost nothing was then known. Late in 1830, therefore, he set out from Alexandria for Syria to begin the more hazardous part of his work.

⁶⁰ F. R. Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition* (London, 1868), pp. 4-5, 10-11. Chesney speaks of the estimated difference in levels as 36 feet; Mr. T. L. Peacock stated that it was 30½ feet. The French engineers actually reported a mean difference of 30½ feet.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 364-373; Lane-Poole, *Life of General F. R. Chesney*, p. 467.

At Damascus Chesney conferred with the English Consul-General, Mr. J. W. Farren. The latter had already drawn up plans looking toward the despatch of Indian mails from the Persian Gulf to Hit, on the Euphrates, and thence to the Mediterranean coast, and he actively assisted Chesney in his efforts to discover the most suitable line from the Mediterranean through Syria to the Euphrates. After considerable rambling about, Chesney definitely set out for the Euphrates on December 11, 1830, and fifteen days later was rewarded with his first glimpse of that "noble river," which was to dominate all of his subsequent career.

The instructions with which Chesney was supplied by the India House for this portion of his surveys seem to indicate that the Euphrates had previously been discussed as possibly offering a practicable water route for most of the distance from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. Chesney was instructed to report on Syrian harbors, on any available roads through the Syrian desert to the Euphrates and the time by each route, on the nature of the Euphrates trade, and on the character of Arab tribes along the river. He was to discover at what point navigation ceased, and "at what point (if any) below Beles it would be possible to procure wood in sufficient quantity for steam-navigation."⁶² This gave evidence that the hopes of those responsible for Indian affairs centred about the possibility of using steam power as far as water courses would permit.

To determine most of these points, it was necessary to descend the Euphrates to its mouth. As Chesney was alone and unarmed, this was no ordinary matter. He found the Arabs ill disposed toward him, as they habitually were to all strangers. In all of his efforts in Syria and Mesopotamia he experienced unusual difficulties because of the attitude of the Egyptian Government toward any projects for lines of transit through Syria. Mehemet Ali apparently had no objections to the employment of lines traversing Egypt, for these he could control at will and profit from accordingly. But in the case of lines through Mesopotamia, where Turkish influence might predominate to the prejudice of Egyptian interests, the Pasha was determined to put all possible obstacles in the way. On a number of occasions loss of property and threats of violence to European prospectors and surveyors in Syria and Mesopotamia were traceable to the door of the Egyptian Viceroy.⁶³

At Anah on the Euphrates Chesney was able to obtain a small

⁶² Chesney, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 172-173, *passim*; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 225, *passim*.

native boat and two native assistants after considerable difficulty. With these he began his descent of the river on January 2, 1831. Proceeding slowly down the river in the midst of a hostile population, suspicious of his native boatmen, and often without sufficient food, Chesney had the greatest difficulty in mapping the course of the river and determining its depth. At Felujah, where the Euphrates and Tigris approach each other, he left his boat and made a flying visit to Bagdad. Here he was warmly welcomed by the British Agent, Major Robert Taylor, who was an enthusiastic believer in the Euphrates route.

Chesney's survey of the Euphrates almost terminated with this brief stop at Bagdad, for here he learned for the first time of other pathfinders who, under orders from Bombay, were engaged at that moment in the same enterprise of discovering possible lines of communication through Mesopotamia. He was informed that in 1830 Messrs. Bowater and Elliott had been engaged in examining the adaptability of the lower course of the Euphrates to steam navigation. Late in that year they had been joined by Lieut. James W. Taylor, brother of the Resident at Bagdad, and a few of his friends, all newly arrived from India. Shortly afterward, as has been mentioned, when the party were in the neighborhood of Mosul, they were attacked by Arabs, and Taylor and two of his companions were killed. Bowater, one of those who perished, had previously prepared a memoir on the opportunities for steam navigation in the Persian Gulf which was afterward studied by a Parliamentary Committee in 1832.⁶⁴ Elliott, one of the survivors of the ill-fated party, before Chesney's arrival was assigned to assist Lieut. Henry Ormsby, who had already examined and mapped the harbors of the Syrian coast. In April, 1831, Ormsby and Elliott set out from Bagdad for a further survey of the lower course of the Euphrates, having already made some examination of the Tigris. Finding that he had been anticipated to this extent, Chesney prepared to give up his plans and to retrace his steps, and only with difficulty could Major Taylor persuade him to proceed with his work. For the sake of the Euphrates survey this was most fortunate, as Ormsby and Elliott were unable to complete their work on account of Arab hostility, whereas Chesney succeeded in carrying out a preliminary survey.⁶⁵

Chesney's visit at Bagdad was cut short by an outbreak of plague. Hastily leaving the stricken city, he returned to Felujah

⁶⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, 737-741; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 524.

⁶⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 8, pp. 36-40; App. 16, pp. 52-53. See Ormsby's "Narrative of a Journey across the Syrian Desert," in *Trans. of the Bombay Geog. Soc.*, Vol. II. A good deal of antiquarian interest was displayed by all of these early explorers.

and continued his descent of the Euphrates, though under the most trying circumstances. Being at last unable to employ assistance, and being reduced for food to the scanty donations of occasional friendly Arabs, the completion of the voyage to the mouth of the river seemed to be a hopeless venture. However, a crude raft was finally obtained on which, after many narrow escapes, the descent was completed. Through the interstices of this raft, when he thought himself unobserved, Chesney thrust a long pole at intervals and thus determined the approximate depth of the water. At last, worn and half famished, but with some rough charts of the river, he arrived at Basrah toward the end of April, 1831.

In beginning his survey of the Euphrates at a point opposite Damascus, Chesney had intended returning and surveying the upper course of the river from that point to the limits of navigation. This plan was out of the question by the time Basrah was reached because of Arab troubles and outbreaks of the plague, which was particularly virulent in 1831 in some of the regions which would have to be traversed.

Chesney finally found it necessary to return to Constantinople through Persia. *En route* from Mohammerah, on the Persian Gulf, to Trebizond, on the Black Sea, he passed through Tabriz, where he was given some much needed assistance by the British Envoy, Capt. C. D. Campbell, and his assistant, John McNeill. This chance meeting is the more interesting since Capt. Campbell was later one of Chesney's successors in charge of river surveys in Mesopotamia, while McNeill, already interested in the development of new routes to India, was destined to distinguish himself in diplomatic manœuvres in Persia in 1836-1837, and to stand as one of Chesney's staunchest supporters in advocating a Euphrates Valley Railway forty years later. From Trebizond, Chesney proceeded *via* Aleppo to Constantinople and thence home to England, where he arrived at the end of 1832.

Some of Chesney's reports had preceded him to England. His first impressions of the Euphrates, accompanied by sketch maps, had been sent back from Bagdad, and gave a distinctly unfavorable idea of the middle section of the river. Later in the same year he had written the new Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Stratford Canning (afterward Lord Stratford de Redcliffe) that it was doubtful whether a steamer could ascend the Euphrates for any considerable distance. The Lemlum marshes along the lower course would be difficult to pass, he believed, and the rate of the current elsewhere, three or four miles per hour, would be difficult for a steam vessel to overcome. But he reported that, after all,

the most formidable difficulty was the temper of the Arabs, who would surely attack a vessel on every possible occasion.⁶⁸ His opinions on all of these points proved to be well grounded, but unfortunately he reversed his opinions in later reports, with the result that thousands of pounds sterling were expended over a period of several years, and the full development of the Red Sea route was postponed, before the first unfavorable reports on the Euphrates were found to be correct.

⁶⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 16, pp. 60-61, 92-93.

CHAPTER VII

ATTEMPTS TO OPEN THE EUPHRATES ROUTE

CHESNEY'S return from his first surveys in Mesopotamia occurred at a peculiarly appropriate moment from the point of view of British foreign relations. The Eastern Question, instead of subsiding after the settlement of 1829, was reaching a higher pitch than ever because of the advance of Egyptian forces in Syria under the encouragement of the French, while Russia was beginning to assume the attitude of Turkish protector on the other hand. Although Chesney's first reports on the navigability of the Euphrates and the facilities for the development of a definite route through this region had been rather unfavorable, his attitude soon underwent a change after he reached England. He was lionized because of his unique and hazardous experiences and was consulted by the King about political conditions in the East. Under these influences, his final reports to the Board of Control, while including some of the data submitted earlier, were quite different in tone. Here was a possibility, he found, of opposing Russian designs more effectually than by enlisting with the Turkish armies.

This change in attitude on the part of Chesney had far-reaching consequences. It immediately started a long controversy over the relative merits of the "overland" (Egyptian) and "alternative" or "direct" (Mesopotamian) routes, which lasted with varying intensity through most of the remainder of the century.¹ But what was of far greater consequence was the fact that Chesney's approval of the Euphrates as a highway gave Government

¹ As soon as the Euphrates line began to attract favorable attention, a "school" of exponents sprang up, each of whom wished to be considered the pioneer of the route or the originator of the idea. Those who laid claim to such distinction included the English Consul-General, John Barker, Mr. Thomas L. Peacock, of the East India Company, and Major Robert Taylor. Even the French agent, Victor Fontanier, records in one of his books the statement, "I am the first to recognize that facile communications with Asia could be of great advantage to all of Europe." (*Voyage dans l'Inde*, II, 176.) But Chesney, although not the first advocate, must be considered the real apostle of the route to which he devoted his life and much of his fortune.

heads the opportunity they desired for advocating the development of the line for strategic purposes. The decision to adopt this on trial as an official route was encouraged by the rapidity with which steam vessels were being improved, especially for river navigation.²

As has already been mentioned, the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which sat in 1832 to consider the affairs of the East India Company, took up the matter of communication with India as a pressing current problem. Along with papers prepared by other explorers, some of Chesney's maps and final reports were carefully studied.³ Of special interest was his memorandum stating the comparative advantages, as he saw them, of the Red Sea and Euphrates lines. Chesney believed that the route through Egypt might be less expensive to develop, but that such advantages as it possessed would be more than offset by a saving in time (of six or seven days), in distance (of about three hundred miles), and in expensive fuel for steamers in using the Euphrates route. He attributed to this line the additional advantages of all-year utility, greater comfort than the overland route, and large commercial possibilities in the development of Arab trade. Even the nomadic Arabs, he believed, would tend to become sedentary under the influence of regular and profitable commercial opportunities.⁴

The year 1833, which saw such startling developments in connection with the Egyptian advance in Syria, was in England devoted to a study of ways and means of utilizing the Euphrates route to proper advantage.⁵ Various members of Parliament became converts to the Euphrates route, and its espousal by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, gave assurance of the serious purposes of the Government and its willingness to brave any attitude shown by France or Russia. When "owing to its political

² Lane-Poole (Ed.), *Life of General F. R. Chesney*, p. 252, *passim*. This work is replete with errors, great and small; but it gives the critical reader, nevertheless, an excellent picture of an ambitious and honorable, if somewhat impracticable, soldier and imperialist.

³ *Parliamentary Paper*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, pp. 737-741; *ibid.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 8, p. 36. See maps in Chesney's *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*.

⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, App. 16, pp. 70, 71, 98. Cf. *Asiatic Journal*, VI, N.S., Pt. II, 130-131. Consul-General Farren estimated the time between Bombay and London by way of Syria, using steam, at 55 days. *Parl. Pap.*, 1831-1832, No. 735. — II, App. 25, p. 757.

⁵ See *Reports on the Navigation of the Euphrates, Submitted to Government by Capt. Chesney, R. A.* (London, 1833). His biographer, Stanley Lane-Poole, says (*Life of Chesney*, p. 256) that Chesney was regarded as the pioneer of both of the shorter routes. Only a strong partisan could accept that view.

bearings" a discussion of the route rose in the Cabinet, no agreement was reached.⁶ This necessitated making the project, if it was to survive, one for the consideration of Parliament. Therefore, in June, 1834, "it was settled that Lord Lansdowne should bring up the subject of communication with India before the Lords, and that Mr. Grant [Charles Grant, later Lord Glenelg, President of the India Board] should do the same in the Commons."⁷ The House of Commons was sufficiently impressed with the need for a new and shorter route to India to refer the entire subject to a Select Committee of the House.⁸ The Committee, consisting of Charles Grant and thirty-five others, nearly all men of note, at once began the task of gathering data on the political situation in Persia, the advance of Russia, and the relative advantages of both the Red Sea and Euphrates routes.

The first witness called was Thomas Love Peacock, Examiner of the East India House. He pointed out the apparent impracticability of ever improving the Red Sea route by means of a Suez Canal, assuming the surveys made earlier by French engineers to be correct. To develop the Red Sea line to India on the existing basis would require, he thought, four steam vessels in Indian waters, costing altogether about £100,000 per year. Considering all factors, Peacock favored the opening of the Euphrates route, employing for this purpose two small, flat-bottomed steamers, at an estimated cost of about £14,000, to ply between the Persian Gulf and a point on the Euphrates opposite the Syrian coast.⁹ Four reasons were given for preferring the Euphrates: the expense of developing the Red Sea route, which did not seem to be warranted by its political or commercial value; the navigability of the Euphrates the year round and the constant accessibility of Indian ports from the Persian Gulf; the necessity of controlling the Persian Gulf rather than the Red Sea in guarding against Russia; and the suppressing of piracy in Indian waters by the utilization of the Persian Gulf route with armed steamers, which could at the same time carry on the communications. Peacock agreed with other advocates of the Euphrates route in believing that it should be considered supplementary to that by way of the Red Sea, and he urged the opening of both lines at the earliest possible date.¹⁰ The recommendations of this recognized expert, though obviously representing the views of the proprietors of the

⁶ Chesney, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., XXIV, 142.

⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., p. 8; *ibid.*, App. 2, p. 12. Chesney had estimated the cost of such an experiment at £13,000.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Min. of Ev., pp. 1-13.

East India Company and designed to save that concern as much expense as possible, were well received and considerably influenced the report of the Committee.

Chesney was summoned to report on his findings during the survey of 1830-1831. He gave an enthusiastic picture of the advantages which would undoubtedly result from a commercial development of the Euphrates. He believed that if order were secured and trade developed many of the nomadic Arabs would become fixed and industrious in their habits. He advocated the experimental opening of the Euphrates with steam vessels for the duration of a year, with subsequent action to be determined by the results of this trial.

Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm was strong in support of the Red Sea route. This was quite natural, for as the officer in charge of the Mediterranean squadron for a number of years he had seen the growth of the British steam packets in Mediterranean waters from a few experimental hulls in 1825 to a powerful fleet of fast steamers in 1834, making carefully scheduled trips between Southampton and Malta. It had long been his desire to extend this line from Malta to Alexandria, there to connect with steam vessels coming from Bombay. This was the plan he had worked out in conjunction with his brothers, Sir John Malcolm, when Governor of Bombay, and Sir Charles Malcolm, who during the late twenties had been Superintendent of the Indian Navy with headquarters at Bombay.¹¹ However, as the Admiral had little knowledge of the Euphrates route, his advocacy of the Red Sea line contributed little to the final report.

Among other witnesses was Thomas Waghorn, now the avowed rival of Chesney as he had formerly been of James W. Taylor. Waghorn's testimony was characteristic — forceful, disjointed, exaggerated; but he nevertheless gave the impression of being exceedingly well informed. After reviewing his own efforts in the cause of steam navigation to India, Waghorn devoted his further remarks to the project of establishing a steam line direct from Suez to Calcutta on a quarterly basis, for which he considered a Government loan of £20,000 sufficient. He was still of the opinion that the Cape route, of which he had long been a leading advocate, might be profitably employed by steam lines, but he had only slurs for the Euphrates project.¹²

A final bit of evidence, almost prophetic in character, was received from James Bird, of the Bombay Medical Establishment, who had travelled "overland," that is, by way of Egypt, from India. He identified himself as an accurate and impartial ob-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-164.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 208-232.

server, pointing out that the Euphrates and Suez routes each had peculiar advantages. But as to trade, he believed it would not be shifted to new channels at once merely by the opening of shorter lines of communication. "It can," he said, "only follow the construction of an iron railway or canal across the isthmus that divides the Red Sea from the Mediterranean." And as it was not clear to the Committee why there should once have existed a profitable trade overland through Egypt and through Syria which could not be readily revived, he pointed out that "The commerce of ancient times was one of luxury, not of domestic manufacture, as at present; and the articles being of small bulk and of comparatively greater value than in these times, afforded to the merchant a profit that proved sufficient for meeting the expenses of a tedious land journey from the Euphrates (and the Red Sea) to the Mediterranean."¹³

After carefully weighing the evidence from those most competent to speak on the subject in hand, the Committee prepared their report, which was so well founded and intelligent in most parts that it provided the groundwork for several similar committees during the century. The report, dated July 14, 1834, stated as a thesis that "a regular and expeditious communication with India by steam vessels is of great importance both to Great Britain and to India."¹⁴ It pointed out that the practicability of the Red Sea route during eight months of the year had been well established during the previous five years, and that although this was expensive, "it is expedient that measures should be immediately taken for the regular establishment of steam communication from India by the Red Sea. The fact was noted that steam had not been applied to the Persian Gulf route, where the southwest monsoon need not be taken into consideration, nor to the Euphrates River, where it was believed there would be no obstacles during most of the year. There was a question whether, during the dry season, the Euphrates could be navigated. However, since the monsoon months, June, July, August, and September, did not coincide with the dry season in Mesopotamia, November, December, January, and February, the Committee believed that "the effective trial of both lines would open a certain communication with the Mediterranean in every month of the year, changing the line of the steam vessels on both sides according to the seasons."¹⁵

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-218.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Report of the Committee, pp. 3-4; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., XXV, 930-932.

¹⁵ That is, the two routes were to be synchronized, if possible. It was the southwest monsoon of the one *versus* the low water of the other.

For carrying out these recommendations, the Committee proposed that the Malta line of steam packets be sent in the future to such ports of Egypt and Syria as would complete the communication. It was suggested that the expense of making a trial of the Euphrates route, estimated at £20,000, be voted by Parliament, as the East India Company had already incurred heavy expense in the Red Sea experiments. In conclusion, it was urged that the report be acted upon as quickly as possible.¹⁶

Consideration of the Report came up in the House of Commons on August fourth. Anticipating the argument that any matter pertaining to the development of India should be at the charge of the East India Company, Charles Grant pointed out that some of the leading objectives of the proposed plan were political and hence belonged to Government. He showed further that the East India Company had already spent between £60,000 and £70,000 in tentatively developing a line of communication by way of the Red Sea, yet no permanent equipment had been acquired for the establishment of a regular service. He also remarked that since the removal of the last vestiges of the Company's commercial monopoly in 1833, responsibility for the establishment of lines for mail service, particularly those which possessed a strategic value, tended to devolve upon the British Government. It was, he said, "the duty of England to watch all the modes of access to India."¹⁷

No particular objection to the plan was voiced. There was some headshaking; even Grant admitted a considerable degree of doubt as to the practicability of the route for which he was asking an appropriation. But it was the general consensus of opinion that the political situation east of the Mediterranean demanded some action on the part of Great Britain, and that £20,000 was not too much to pay for securing the approaches to India. That amount, consequently, was appropriated, and thus, after years of disinterestedness and inaction the wheels of government were set in motion by the urge of foreign policy to bring about the establishment of better means of communication.

The India Board was entrusted with the task of carrying out the resolutions of the Parliamentary Committee with the funds voted by the House of Commons. One of the first tasks lay in the selection of the proper personnel for the difficult undertaking of placing and operating steam vessels on the Euphrates. Ches-

¹⁶ A list of eighteen plausible reasons for preferring the Euphrates to the Red Sea route was printed in the *Bombay Gazette*, 7 Aug., 1833.

¹⁷ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., XXV, 930-932.

ney was, of course, the logical leader for such an experimental enterprise, and he was sounded by the India Office on his willingness to assume command. At first, either through lack of confidence in the reports he had made, or through extreme modesty, he demurred, and only consented to take over the work, without pay, when he was informed that it was the King's express wish. Upon accepting appointment, Chesney was instructed to surround himself with a trained personnel for the diverse tasks ahead. Most of the latter part of the year 1834 was devoted to this part of the business.

The India Board meanwhile placed a rush order with those pioneers of steamship construction, Messrs. Laird,¹⁸ of Birkenhead, near Liverpool, for two small, flat-bottomed river steamers, to be built in accordance with specifications to be furnished by the Commander of the Expedition. The cost of these vessels and of other equipment was considerably above the original estimates, and before the end of the year mounting expenses made it appear doubtful whether the Parliamentary appropriation would suffice for the work. At the same time, changes in the Cabinet made it impossible to approach the Government for a further appropriation. In this dilemma, the Court of Directors of the East India Company agreed to supply an additional £5000 for the venture. Also it was arranged that at the termination of the Euphrates Expedition the Company should purchase the two steamers and either employ them in working a permanent line of vessels on the Euphrates or, in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome of the survey, transfer them to India for the navigation of the Indus.¹⁹

Meanwhile, throughout the latter part of 1834 a gradual reaction had set in against the carrying out of the Euphrates idea. There were not lacking those among Government officials and strategists who ridiculed the whole idea. Some even maintained that the Euphrates route, far from opposing Russian designs, might, if developed, even aid Russian armies in reaching the Persian Gulf.²⁰ Opinion in India was generally against the expenditure of any large sum of money in attempting a doubtful project when the Suez route, of proved feasibility, was still undeveloped. The *Calcutta Courier* said, ". . . We look at the

¹⁸ Mr. M'Gregor Laird, of this firm, had been a witness before the Parliamentary Committee in June, 1834. Many of his suggestions concerning the proper equipment for a Euphrates steam survey were carried out. *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., pp. 56-70.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 7.

²⁰ *Quarterly Review*, LII, 405-406.

project here as a very wild scheme, and an absolute waste of money. . . . There are so many startling difficulties in the way . . . that we hope for no useful result from this expensive voyage of discovery."²¹ Lord Palmerston had at all times taken care not to commit himself to the undertaking, as he was fearful that any such move, backed by the Government, might aggravate the already unsatisfactory foreign situation.²² A fatal blow to the whole project for a Euphrates Expedition was narrowly avoided when Lord Ellenborough replaced Charles Grant as President of the India Board in November at the time of the fall of the Grey Ministry. Ellenborough had been constantly hostile to the plan, and immediately upon taking office he gave instructions to have all preparations stopped. He soon found, however, that the work was too far advanced to be terminated easily, and a word from King William, who was exceedingly interested in the experiment, brought a grudging assent from the India Office.²³

The selection of the personnel for the work was made with unusual care. Every one of the fifty young officers and men chosen was an expert in some line of endeavor, and most of those who survived the Expedition distinguished themselves in later years in some kind of national service.²⁴ Most of these men, recruited from the British Army and Navy, the Indian Navy, and English technical industries, were ready for service before the steamers were completed. Several of them were sent out to Syria to make preliminary surveys of the roads to be taken in transporting the equipment from the Syrian coast to the Euphrates at Bir. Lieut. Henry Blosse Lynch, I.N., a rather remarkable linguist and diplomat, did excellent service during the winter of 1834-1835 among the Arabs in preparing them for the innovation to follow, though much of his work was undone by Mehemet Ali after the Expedition arrived in Syria.²⁵

At the same time, other agencies had been at work. The British Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Ponsonby, had secured from the Porte an official permit for the Euphrates Expedition. This was issued on December 29, in the form of an Im-

²¹ *Calcutta Courier*, 30 March, 1835; quoted in *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 10.

²² *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d. Ser., CXLVII, 1652-1662, 1676-1683; *Quarterly Review*, CII, 392 ff.; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 446. It was the same kind of fear on Palmerston's part which wrecked a mature plan for a Euphrates Valley Railway in 1857.

²³ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 281, 304.

²⁴ *Annual Register*, 1835, Pt. II, 18; David Fraser, *The Short Cut to India* (London, 1909), p. 255; A. H. Layard, in the *Quarterly Review*, CII, 366 n.

²⁵ Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, II, 33-34; Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, pp. 547-548.

perial *firman*, which came to have an importance later in the century out of all proportion to that originally assigned to it. Addressed to all the Turkish officials along "the two banks of the Euphrates," it continued:

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Great Britain . . . Lord Ponsonby . . . has presented at our Sublime Porte an official note, by which it appears that the British Government asks permission to navigate alternately two steam boats on the river Euphrates, which flows at a little distance from Bagdad, in order to facilitate commerce.

In consequence, an order has been sent to our . . . Governor of Bagdad and of Bussora, Ali Riza Pasha, to furnish our Sublime Porte with information on the proposed navigation.²⁶

Although the answer of the Pasha has not yet arrived, the British Ambassador has made yet further representations on this head, informing our Sublime Porte that the English Government awaits our reply.

Therefore, we have permitted and do permit two steam boats to navigate the Euphrates, alternately, and this navigation may continue as long as it results in no inconvenience, and an official note containing the substance of this has been transmitted to the British Ambassador.

A *Firman* couched in the same terms has been addressed to the Pasha of Bagdad and of Bussora. . .²⁷

This interesting document furnished to the Expedition was destined to serve as a charter for the subsequent commercial navigation — not of the Euphrates — but of the Tigris River by an English concern, originally organized by the firm of Lynch Brothers, of whom two served with the Euphrates Expedition.²⁸

²⁶ It subsequently appeared that the Pasha of Bagdad was not at all averse from the project.

²⁷ Lewis Hertslet (Comp.), *A Complete Collection of the Treaties and Conventions, and Reciprocal Regulations . . . between Great Britain and Foreign Powers . . . so far as they relate to Commerce and Navigation . . .* (24 vols., London, 1840-1907), XIII, 838 — a French text. The translation is mine. A mediocre and incomplete English version is given in C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relations to India and Neighbouring Countries*, VII, 15.

²⁸ Just how this *firman* could be taken as applying to the Tigris is difficult to understand. Fraser, in his *Short Cut to India*, p. 254 f., suggests that the Porte did not appreciate the difference between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in 1834, and believed that Bagdad was situated on the latter stream. A Vizirial Letter issued by the Pasha of Bagdad in 1846, relative to the navigation of the Euphrates and Tigris by English steam boats, may be considered as supplementing and amplifying the

The essential character of the Euphrates Expedition and something of its political bearing were indicated by a set of instructions issued by the Foreign Office. Chesney was made Colonel on special mission —

For the establishment of a communication between the Mediterranean Sea and His Majesty's possessions in the East Indies, by means of a steam communication on the River Euphrates. . . It will be Colonel Chesney's first duty to use every exertion to secure the success of the Expedition in the shortest possible time, and always to bear in mind the necessity of making his arrangements in such a manner as that their utility may be permanent in the event of his success. . . Colonel Chesney is always to bear in mind that the character of the Expedition is one of peace; that it is undertaken with the permission of a friendly power, without whose countenance and coöperation success cannot reasonably be expected. . .²⁹

However, even with the consent and support of the Turkish Government, it became problematical whether the Expedition could proceed. A considerable part of the course of the Expedition through Syria and down the Euphrates River lay within the territory assigned to Mehemet Ali by the terms of the Turco-Egyptian agreement of 1833. The Pasha had no wish to bring about an open breach with England, but he had no sympathy with a project which might easily lead to the establishment of a permanent barrier to his territorial ambitions. So while promising aid to the Expedition "as far as his authority extended," actually he employed every possible device to thwart the success of the experiment. In this he was largely successful, as will be noted.³⁰

Arrangements for the survey were not completed quite as soon as expected. Meanwhile, a controversy developed regarding the proper starting place for the survey. Members of the India Board believed the steamers should be shipped around the Cape and through the Persian Gulf to Basrah, where there would be some facilities for assembling the steamers. Chesney, however, was a bit doubtful regarding the ability of the steamers to make headway against the stiff current in many places along the course

firman of 1834. *Hertslet's Com. Treat.*, XIII, 839-840. Cf. the divergent statements in A. H. Layard's *Autobiography and Letters* (London, 1903), I, 331 n., and in *The Near East*, II, 358.

²⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 5; Chesney, *The Expedition for the Survey of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris*, I, xi.

³⁰ Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, I, 16; *Annual Register*, 1835, Pt. II, 19.

of the Euphrates. He insisted that the Expedition should in the first instance proceed *down* the river, and he finally gained his point.³¹

Plans were outlined therefore by which the Expedition was to proceed first to Suedia (Seleucia) at the mouth of the Orontes River, which was to serve as a *point de départ*. From here the *impedimenta* of the Expedition would be transported overland past Antioch to the nearest point on the Euphrates, where the steamers would be set up and launched. It was calculated that the melting of snows at the headwaters of the Euphrates would contribute much to the success of the Expedition, and every effort was made to have the steamers ready against the spring flood of 1835.³² It was stipulated by the India Board, however, that if the Expedition was unable to cross the Syrian mountains and desert to the Euphrates, the steamers and other material were to be carried by sea to Bombay, whence the Expedition would proceed to the Persian Gulf and so undertake an initial ascent of the river.³³

The two iron river steamers, appropriately named the *Euphrates* and the *Tigris*, were ready early in 1835, and were peculiarly adapted to the work in hand. While they measured 105 feet and 87 feet respectively in length, they drew less than three feet of water. To guard against accidents in the rocky channel of the Euphrates, the hulls were divided into several water-tight compartments. The engines were constructed to accommodate either coal or wood as fuel, and their fifty and forty horse-power was considered sufficient to propel them up any rapids likely to be encountered. The two vessels, for facility of transportation, were made up into convenient sections and loaded on an ocean-going vessel, the *George Canning*, where all stores were packed so as to make transshipment from the Syrian coast to the Euphrates as easy as possible.

With all at last in readiness, one of the most ambitious path-finding expeditions ever undertaken left Liverpool on February 4, 1835, and sailed for the Mediterranean. The *George Canning* called at Malta for a number of laborers, and touched also at Cyprus, reaching the Bay of Antioch at the mouth of the Orontes on April 3.³⁴

³¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, pp. 60, 61, 63.

³² *Asiatic Journal*, XV, N.S., Pt. II, 237-238.

³³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 6; *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, IV, 374, 375. This was Ellenborough's arrangement. He had insisted on an ascent of the Euphrates being made ever since the Expedition was assured.

³⁴ *Annual Register*, 1835, Pt. II, 19.

It had originally been supposed that the *Euphrates* and *Tigris* could be transported from the coast across the Syrian desert, some 120 miles, and launched on the Euphrates River in time to take advantage of the spring freshets in April and May of 1835. To this end, an attempt was made to navigate the steamers up the Orontes as far as Antioch.³⁵ Immediately after the arrival of the Expedition at Seleucia, Chesney's engineers began assembling the *Tigris*, the smaller of the two vessels. While this was in progress, other materials were landed from the *George Canning*, an exceedingly slow and hazardous process. As soon as the *Tigris* was assembled, her engines were fired and an ascent of the river was undertaken. It was soon found that while engines and paddle wheels functioned well, the steamer was incapable of proceeding far up the river, both because of the shallow water and the rapidity of the current. Consequently the vessel had to be prepared for haulage overland.³⁶

Meanwhile the transport of other machinery and stores to the Euphrates had begun. From the very outset there occurred a heartbreaking series of mishaps and delays, which at times threatened to terminate the whole undertaking. One of the greatest troubles was the unreliability of native workmen. Arab chiefs who had definitely engaged to furnish bullocks, camels, or asses, failed to give any assistance, in spite of the liberal hire offered. Supplies of food bargained for were not delivered. Natives who were employed on one day were often missing on the next — having removed with them sundry stores or bits of machinery belonging to the Expedition. The most astonishing accidents occurred; wagons were overturned, machinery was broken, draft animals were stampeded — all without rime or reason — though the Arabs assisting with the work volubly protested their innocence and regret. At times desert sheiks rode in to the scene of operations with bands of armed followers to rejoice at the discomfiture of the English.³⁷ Very soon it became obvious that an organized system of *sabotage* was in operation, and that unless it could be overcome, the Expedition would never reach the Euphrates.

The principal source of these difficulties was presently traced to the activities of Ibrahim Pasha, son and *generalissimo* of

³⁵ Suggestions were made at one time or another during the thirties for a ship canal between the Euphrates and the Orontes as possibly more practicable than one between the Red Sea and the Nile or Mediterranean.

³⁶ Chesney, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-192; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 295 ff.

³⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 13-15; *Asiatic Journal*, XX, N.S., Pt. II, 37; Chesney, *op. cit.*, pp. 172 ff., 469; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-295. There are continual hints at Russian collusion in these Syrian troubles, but this may have been largely mere suspicion.

Mehemet Ali, who was at this time operating with an Egyptian force not far from the scene of the Expedition's labors in Syria. Partially suspending transport operations, Chesney sent his diplomatic staff to wait upon Ibrahim and even went in person to demand the support which had previously been promised by Mehemet Ali and the Sultan alike.³⁸ Little satisfaction was obtained, however, until after the British authorities had made vigorous representations to Mehemet Ali on the state of affairs in Syria. Then, upon the receipt of new orders from Egypt, Ibrahim changed his attitude and suddenly displayed as much zeal for the cause of steam navigation on the Euphrates as he had formerly shown opposition. He took upon himself the task of coercing the Syrian peasants into lending aid to the transport. But his assistance bore fruit chiefly in his sending out of some Turkish notables from Antioch to assist in roadmaking. This was of course a terrible blow to Turkish pride, and Ibrahim must have taken malicious delight in thus overtly insulting the Sultan, while furnishing a not too effective assistance to the Euphrates Expedition.³⁹

By this time many weeks had elapsed; the Euphrates River was past the flood stage, and still the heavier pieces remained near the port of disembarkation. Furthermore, as spring gave place to Syrian summer, disease came to block activities and to take its toll. Fever and dysentery played havoc with the European force, until at one time the able-bodied were barely able to prevent the complete collapse of the project. In the autumn, Colonel Chesney, who had been working at high pitch and doing the labor of several men, was stricken with fever. For weeks he lay at the very point of death. Meanwhile, little more could be done by his men than to guard the more essential parts of machinery and supplies from injury and to prepare a yard for the assembling of the steamers on the Euphrates.

These and other difficulties combined to extend the work of transporting and assembling the steamers at Fort William, near the Arab town of Bir, from the estimated month to nearly a year.

³⁸ On the hostility shown by the river Arabs, see *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 173, 237.

³⁹ Chesney, *op. cit.*, p. 199; Barker, *Syria and Egypt under the last Five Sultans of Turkey*, II, 216, 217; *Asiatic Journal*, XV, N.S., Pt. II, 94; XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 26; *London Times*, 29 Dec., 1835. The motives which prompted Egyptian interferences were probably threefold: (1) fear of being cut off by the British from further conquests to the north, (2) pique at being treated as vassals of the Sultan, and (3) the desire to confine new commercial routes to Egypt, where goods in transit might be made to yield a revenue. Mehemet Ali encouraged British enterprise in developing the Red Sea route in every way, and had already ordered the construction of a railway between Alexandria and Suez for British use. Egypt paid for the success of this policy by eventually becoming a British protectorate.

The delay naturally involved much additional expense, also; but owing to the peculiar and unexpected nature of the difficulties which had arisen, the India Office took steps to obtain additional funds. Sir John Hobhouse, who had succeeded Lord Ellenborough at the Board of Control early in 1835, was heartily in sympathy with the objects of the Expedition. Upon receiving news of Chesney's illness, he wrote, November 2-

You may depend upon receiving every support from the home authorities, and as the delay occasioned by the Pasha of Egypt has added to your disbursements, I think it my duty to apply to His Majesty's Government, as well as to the Court of Directors, for some addition to the Parliamentary Grant. . . . Whatever may be the result of this enterprise, due justice will be done to your endeavors to ensure its success.⁴⁰

Shortly after this an additional £5000 was authorized by Parliament for the experiment. This and other funds subsequently subscribed by the East India Company made possible the continuation of the work and a testing of the route.⁴¹

During the spring months of 1836, the transport of the Expedition's equipment was completed. Following the arrival at Fort William of the engine boilers, the work of assembling went on rapidly and preparations were completed for the descent while the river was still at flood stage. The *Euphrates* was launched and given a successful trial on March 16. Chesney calculated that Basrah, at the head of the Persian Gulf, should be reached within two months, and that an ascent of the river with mails from India might be made before the river reached its lowest stage. Despatches stating such an intention were sent both to Sir John Hobhouse, at the Board of Control, and to the Bombay Government, so that arrangements might be made in the Mediterranean, on the one hand, and in Indian waters, on the other, for effecting the quickest possible transport of mails between India and England.⁴² This was one of the prime objects in undertaking the survey, and the one which would most readily furnish useful data as to the relative efficiency of the Euphrates and Suez routes.

⁴⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 7. A special *firman*, addressed to Mehemet Ali, was issued in December, 1835, by the Sultan, commanding the Pasha to facilitate British trade in every way possible.—*British and Foreign State Papers*, XXIII, 1291-1292.

⁴¹ Chesney, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁴² *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 478, p. 20.

The *Euphrates* left the temporary base at Fort William soon after her trial trip and proceeded slowly down the great river. She was then joined by the *Tigris*, which, being the smaller vessel, steamed ahead and acted as pathfinder among the many rocky rapids and sand banks.⁴⁸ The technical staff meanwhile made constant soundings, laid down large-scale maps of the river which are still considered of value, and took careful note of conditions along the river banks. At Beles, the point on the river nearest Aleppo, some tentative arrangements were made for a postal station and commercial depot which would be needed when the line should be in full operation. A little further on, at Deir, bitumen and coal in some quantities were found and were tested in the ships' engines with fair results.⁴⁹

The first part of the survey was made, on the whole, quite successfully. But in the midst of the uneventful and quiet descent of the river a disaster occurred, which all but brought the whole enterprise to a sudden tragic end. On the twenty-first of May, about one o'clock on a calm afternoon, a cloud of sand suddenly appeared across the low, flat river valley. Then almost without warning, a cyclonic storm, entirely blotting out the daylight with clouds of whirling sand, swept over the river and enveloped the two steamers which were proceeding with the survey. So entirely unexpected was the storm that no precautionary arrangements could be made. As the wind struck, the two vessels became unmanageable, drifted, and nearly collided. The *Euphrates*, however, was with difficulty driven in to a bank and made secure. The *Tigris* barely missed being so fastened, fell off into the stream, turned broadside to the gale, and was overturned and instantly sunk in the midst of the channel. Most of those on board perished, fifteen officers and men and five natives in all, including Lieut. R. B. Lynch of the Bengal Artillery, brother of the second in command of the Expedition. Both Colonel Chesney and Lieut. H. B. Lynch were on the *Tigris* at the time of the wreck, as that vessel had been leading in the survey; but both narrowly escaped by swimming ashore in the almost total darkness. After the storm had passed, some time was spent in searching for other possible survivors and in taking account of losses. In addition to the irreparable loss of life, some of the maps and

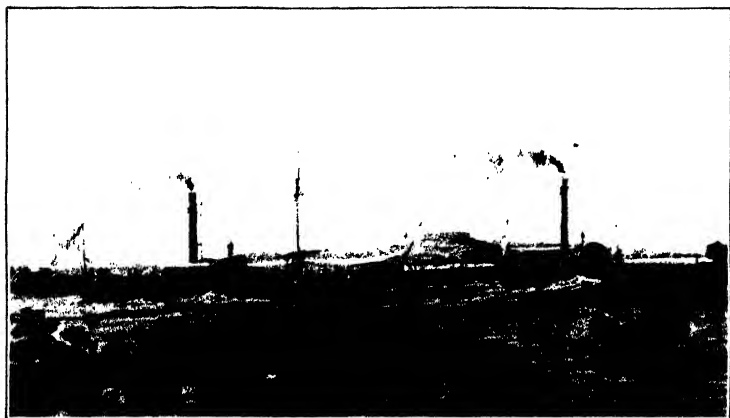
⁴⁸ The Arabs are reported to have been very much depressed at the sight of the armed steamer, recalling their old saying

"When iron floats on the water,

There is nought for the Arabs but dispersion or slaughter."—

Chesney, *Narrative*, pp. 203, 226.

⁴⁹ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 324. Cf. *New York Times Current History*, XVII, 931-938. These bitumen springs appear to have been used since ancient times.



Steamers *Euphrates* and *Tigris* on the Euphrates River in
May 1836



The Roadstead of Suez about 1840

most of the scientific instruments were lost as well.⁴⁵ As the recovery of the sunken vessel was out of the question, the *Euphrates* was left to continue the survey alone, most of the remnants of the crew of the *Tigris* returning to England.⁴⁶

Although deeply grieved and depressed by this shocking loss, Chesney displayed his characteristic indomitable courage, that quality which, more than any other, fitted him for command. Fearing the effect of the disaster on the continuation of the survey, since the available funds were already nearly exhausted, he wrote in hopeful vein to Sir John Hobhouse:

The hurricane has been, it is true, a most trying and calamitous event; but I believe it is regarded by all, even at this early day, as having no more to do with the navigation of the Euphrates, in other respects, than the loss of a packet in the Irish Channel, which might retard, but could not put an end to, the intercourse between England and Ireland. We are therefore continuing our descent . . . hoping . . . to bring up the mail from India within the specified time. . .⁴⁷

The determination to continue was heartily approved by the India Board,⁴⁸ and additional funds were supplied that every effort might be made to carry Indian mails at least once from Basrah to a point opposite one of the Syrian ports on the Mediterranean. Steam vessels were already waiting at both ends of the Euphrates line, and it remained only for the Expedition to supply the missing link. This continued to be the principal immediate object of the survey.

Most of the lower course of the Euphrates was navigated with somewhat greater expedition than the section between Bir and Anah. All of this portion had been surveyed by Chesney in 1831, but even with this advantage, a great deal of trouble was experienced in passing through the Lemlum marshes. There the river separated into many small tortuous channels, and the main

⁴⁵ A monumental drinking fountain was erected in Bombay by governmental and public subscription soon after the disaster, commemorating those who lost their lives. *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 45.

⁴⁶ *London Times*, 29 and 30 July, 1836, *Asiatic Journal*, XX, N.S., Pt. II, 237; XXV, N.S., Pt. II, 98. Attempts to raise the vessel were made later, and although once reported successful, they failed. A part of the iron hull was discovered in a sand bank years later. Cf. "Report of Mr. William Tarrt, Superintending Engineer of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company," May, 1879, in W. P. Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Railway a Lecture* (1883) pp. 89-90.

⁴⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 21-23, *Annual Register*, 1836, Pt. II, 64 f.; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

⁴⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 10.

course of the river was often difficult to discover. In many places shore parties had to warp the steamer around sharp bends in the stream. Other delays were due to efforts made in passing to conciliate the numerous and powerful Arab tribes in lower Mesopotamia and to start a bit of traffic in English wares. At some points along the river trading operations were quite successful, and Chesney reported to the India Board that they had "sold and bartered largely with much advantage."⁴⁰

As the Expedition approached the head of the Persian Gulf, the friendly overtures of the party were generally not well received by the Arabs. This was not so much due to prejudice against the innovation of steam navigation, apparently, as it was the result of the machinations of the French Consul at Basrah, M. Victor Fontanier. That wily diplomat had already had much experience in western Asia, having served as special agent of the French Government in the Near East during the years 1821-1829.⁵⁰ In 1835 he was again sent out on special mission to discover the ulterior objects of the British Government in organizing the Euphrates Expedition, and to report on British activities generally in western Asia and in India.⁵¹ This commission was performed zealously enough, even though he knew none of the native languages and had to rely on interpreters. From the time of the arrival of the Euphrates Expedition in Syria, Fontanier was stationed at Basrah, where he used every means at his command for obstructing the progress of the steam survey. Largely to his efforts was due the increasing hostility of the Arabs toward the English along the lower course of the river. Fontanier even persuaded the Arabs to cut down and throw palm trees into the river at one point, and he had suggested the possibility of stretching a series of iron chains across the river in order to bar the progress of the steam vessel altogether.⁵² He wrote of the Expedition not long afterward,

⁴⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 24. Chesney reported on several occasions that there were good indications of a profitable trade.

⁵⁰ Victor Fontanier, *Voyages en Orient, Entrepris par Ordre du Gouvernement Français, de l'Année 1821 à l'Année 1829*. . . (2 vols., Paris, 1829).

⁵¹ Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde et le Golfe Persique, par l'Égypte et la Mer Rouge*. (2 parts in 3 vols., Paris, 1844-1846.) Cf. *London Times*, 29 Dec., 1835. In quoting his instructions and in giving the details of his work, apparently with the approval of the French Foreign Office, Fontanier related facts and incidents of no ordinary delicacy and significance. Whatever may have been the effects of his writings in France, they undoubtedly contributed much to English apprehension of French motives and policies for a number of years. He was evidently convinced that "This was not a simple voyage of discovery undertaken by love of science or of glory, but a question of the greatest gravity, of which the events of 1840 were a consequence."—I, 289.

⁵² *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 478, p. 49; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 116;

I have studied the details with some care, and though I may know the results it is hoped to attain, I do not think one need flatter himself that it will succeed all at once. . . I do not think an enterprise executed under his [the Duke of Wellington's] direction could result in taking away, in Asiatic affairs, the advantages to which our geographic position and our anterior relations give us an incontestible right.⁶³

In consequence of these difficulties, it was only on June 18 that the *Euphrates* reached Kurnah, at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. On the following day the Expedition arrived at Basrah, on the Shaat-el-Arab, near the head of the Gulf, where a rousing welcome was given by the little English colony.⁶⁴

Looking toward a rapid descent of the Euphrates River by the Expedition, arrangements had been made during the spring for one of the Indian mails to be brought to Basrah by the *Hugh Lindsay*, which was to carry back to India the despatches, now old, brought by the *Euphrates*. Accordingly, the *Hugh Lindsay* had arrived in the Shaat-el-Arab from Bombay some weeks before the appearance of the *Euphrates*, bringing out both mails and passengers. But when the Expedition did arrive at last, an overhauling of the steamer was obviously required before an ascent of the river could be attempted. As this would necessitate further delay, the commander of the *Hugh Lindsay*, already long out of patience, determined to carry his cargo on to Suez, returning thence to Bombay for new orders before again proceeding to Basrah. The first Indian mails intended for the new route thus reached Europe by the passage through Egypt or "overland" route.

Proper facilities for the repair of the *Euphrates* were to be found only at Bushire, on the eastern shore of the Persian Gulf, and there the steamer was taken as quickly as possible. While repairs were in progress, Chesney and a few of his party sailed across the Gulf to Grane, on the Arabian coast, in order to send

W. F. Ainsworth, *Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition* (2 vols., London, 1888), II, 75, 94-96. Cf. Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, I, 295. Fontanier threw all the blame for Arab hostility on a fanatical English missionary named Samuel. His polemical literature and rash statements just at the time of the arrival of the Expedition at Basrah probably did give rise to the idea among the Arabs that the British were intending to impose Christianity by force, and the British functionary at Basrah had to compel Samuel to leave, meanwhile publicly burning his literature.

⁶³ Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, I, 291-292, 310, 311; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 344. Fontanier was treated with uniform consideration and generosity by the British authorities with whom he came in contact, however.

⁶⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 478, pp. 24, 25; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-336.

despatches to England by the desert route, which had been employed at irregular intervals for about half a century. Chesney hoped by this means partially to neutralize the disappointment arising in England from the many delays and accidents to which the Expedition had been subject. He also considered this a fitting occasion for sending to the India Board a series of reports on the work already accomplished by the survey and on the feasibility of permanently establishing a steam line on the Euphrates. To supplement his own statements, he asked each of his officers for a written, sealed opinion on the advantages of the route being surveyed.

Most of these reports, reflecting the ideas and wishes of the Commander, spoke in glowing terms of the feasibility of opening a Euphrates steam route. The political advantages of the line were reiterated and the commercial possibilities were reviewed. The friendliness of the Arabs was emphasized.⁵⁵ Only Capt. J. B. B. Estcourt referred pessimistically to the difficulties which the Lelum marshes afforded. He believed it would be necessary to cut a canal for some 23 miles through a section of the marshes before river navigation could be developed in an efficient manner.

Chesney added his own statement to the others. In this he minimized the difficulties of navigation on the Euphrates, though he thought it might be necessary to cut a short channel through a part of the marsh region. His rather visionary schemes, which tacitly admitted the presence of very real obstacles along the course of the Euphrates, greatly weakened the whole case for the development of the projected route. Nevertheless, in summing up his remarks on the practicability of the Euphrates line, Chesney said, "It will be admitted, on all hands, that the great river [Euphrates], considering its length, is one of the most navigable in the world."⁵⁶ This statement neither he nor any subsequent navigator of the Euphrates was able to prove.

The many interruptions suffered by the Expedition during the descent to the Persian Gulf created among Government heads in England the feeling that while the Commander possessed an ample supply of courage and optimism, he was somewhat lacking in that singleness of purpose essential to the accomplishment of a

⁵⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 29. In establishing a post at Mohammerah for the navigation of the Karun, Chesney enlisted the aid of the sheik of that district by taking him under British protection, although he was in revolt against Turkish authorities. Thus, a convenient precedent was established for the blockade of the *Bagdadbahn* below Bagdad in similar fashion early in the twentieth century. See Fontanier, *Voyage*, etc., I, 308.

⁵⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 26-35.

prearranged program. This opinion became a conviction as the reports of the Expedition's officers were perused and as instructions from England were repeatedly ignored. Instead of concentrating on an ascent of the Euphrates after reaching the Gulf, on which the verdict of success or failure depended, Chesney decided to widen his operations by making scientific and commercial surveys of the other principal rivers finding outlets in the Persian Gulf. As the *Euphrates* was reconditioned before the arrival of the second Indian mail, a brief survey was made of the lower Karun River, although the hostility of the Arabs made the venture extremely hazardous.⁵⁷ Upon the return to Basrah, Chesney determined to carry some newly-arrived Indian mails up the Tigris to Bagdad, whence they might be sent overland to the Syrian coast. This decision to postpone further the ascent of the Euphrates took no note of the fact that arrangements had just been completed by the India Board at considerable expense to establish a steam link between Malta and the Syrian coast for the express purpose of conveying to England a mail transmitted by the Euphrates line.⁵⁸

The *Euphrates* arrived at Bagdad on September 30 without particular incident, though considerable time had been lost in the cutting of green firewood along the river banks. Members of the Expedition received a warm reception at the City of the Caliphs, where Major Robert Taylor was still British Resident and where the ruling Pasha was kindly disposed toward British mercantile enterprise.⁵⁹ Several days were spent here, occupied in fuelling the vessel and discussing the position of the city on the projected Anglo-Indian route in relation to both trade and communication. Before returning to Basrah, the Expedition proceeded for a considerable distance farther up the Tigris River surveying and mapping. This and various delays during the descent occupied considerable time, so that it was October 16 when the *Euphrates* again arrived at Kurnah. Here the *Hugh Lindsay* was found, whose Captain had been very impatiently

⁵⁷ The Arabs of this region, who were claimed both as Turkish and Persian subjects, gave allegiance to neither Government, an attitude productive of frequent hostilities.

⁵⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 8-11, 25; "A General Statement of the labors . . . of the Expedition to the Euphrates . . .," in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, V, 675-682.

⁵⁹ Major Taylor was a leading advocate of the Euphrates route. His brother had perished in a fray with the Arabs while attempting a survey of the Euphrates in 1830, his son gave testimony in favor of the route before the Parliamentary Committee of 1834, and his daughter married Lieut. H. B. Lynch, of the Euphrates Expedition, in 1838. Taylor owed his influence in Mesopotamia partly to his own family connections, having espoused the daughter of a well-to-do Armenian.

waiting for a fortnight.⁶⁰ The opportunity to establish a noteworthy record in the transmission of the mails to England was already lost, but nevertheless preparations were made for an immediate ascent of the Euphrates with the belated despatches.

The first stage of the ascent proceeded well in spite of the low level of the river. Difficulties rapidly multiplied, however, when the Lelum marshes were reached. Here the steamer had to be towed almost entirely through the narrow, tortuous channels by land parties. But fate ended even this slow progress. On October 30 a faulty air-pump of the *Euphrates* drew in some river sand and a piston head was broken, thus ending the last hopes that the river might be ascended within the time assigned for the completion of the work. A return to Basrah was imperative. But there was still a chance to get the mails through to the Syrian coast. One of the party, a Mr. James Fitzjames, volunteered to carry them on overland. He, with some of the other passengers who had come out from India, proceeded up the river in a hired native boat, hoping to cross from the upper Euphrates to Aleppo and so to the coast. Hardly had this group passed from the view of those on the steamer when they were attacked by a band of Arabs, utterly despoiled of their belongings including mails and clothing, and threatened with death. After considerable delay they were released. Fitzjames managed to recover the greater portion of the mails and to continue his way by slow stages, being entirely without means. Eventually he reached the coast of Syria and the mails were sent on to England, arriving fully three months later than had been expected.⁶¹

Chesney's original instructions from the India Board directed that after he had once reached Basrah he should consider himself under the direction of the Indian Government. There the direct authority of the Board of Control was to cease and that of the East India Company was to replace it, since it had been arranged that any permanent line of communication between the Persian Gulf and the coast of Syria should be operated by the India authorities. No instructions from India reached Basrah ahead of the Expedition, however, and Chesney therefore acted on his own responsibility. Following the mishap to the *Euphrates* at the Lelum marshes, it was apparent that nothing further of great importance could be accomplished during the few weeks remaining of the time allotted to the Expedition. Hence at Basrah,

⁶⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, N.S., Pt. II, 51; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 40.

⁶¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 42, 55; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-354; Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 341-343; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 116, 261. Fitzjames lost his life with the ill-starred Arctic Expedition under Sir John Franklin.

where the *Hugh Lindsay* still lingered, Chesney arranged to sail to Bombay to plead at that Presidency for additional time and money for the Euphrates survey. The *Euphrates*, which was quickly repaired by an engineer of the *Hugh Lindsay*, was turned over to Captain Estcourt with instructions to employ the time remaining in completing the surveys of the Karun and Tigris Rivers before disbanding the Expedition at Bagdad on January 31, 1837.⁶²

Soon after Chesney's arrival at Bombay, a meeting of the subscribers of the Bombay Steam Fund was held to consider his plans for the further development of the Euphrates route. In answer to the objection that the first attempts had not demonstrated the possibility of conveying mails or goods up the Euphrates, Chesney insisted that the object had not been to open a mail route at once, that it was "never contemplated, or provided for in any way"; but that the object had been to determine the navigability and commercial opportunities of the Euphrates, Tigris, and Karun Rivers, all of which had been accomplished.⁶³ The Bombay merchants were favorably impressed with Chesney's account of the commercial possibilities of Mesopotamia, and considered appropriating £7000 of their steam fund for the permanent establishment of two small steamers on the Euphrates, in case other portions of the whole line were developed by British or Indian authorities.

Chesney next approached the Bombay Government with the suggestion that "on account of the moral as well as real strength," the opening of the River Euphrates should be in connection with the development of the Red Sea route. He proposed that for a period of twelve or eighteen months Indian steamers should sail alternately to Suez and Basrah, at the end of which time experience should determine whether both routes should be permanently established.⁶⁴ The Bombay authorities, while apparently favorably inclined, pleaded lack of authority to act, and referred the matter to the Supreme Government at Calcutta. Here the scheme was turned down as impracticable. Chesney therefore was compelled to leave India with no more apparent result from his efforts than the gold-mounted sword presented to him by the Bombay merchants.⁶⁵

⁶² Chesney, *Narrative*, pp. 322, 329; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 43-47. Cf. Sir E. A. W. Budge, *By Nile and Tigris* (2 vols., London, 1920), I, 212.

⁶³ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 45, 297. Cf. *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 11, 12.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 540, pp. 46-47; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 36.

⁶⁵ Chesney, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-331. See *Asiatic Journal*, XVII, N.S., Pt. II, 276. While Chesney had been engaged with the survey, his enemies, and Thomas Waghorn

Meanwhile, the Expedition under Estcourt continued surveys of the Karun and Tigris Rivers until an accident to the rudder of the steamer forced a return to Bagdad. Here, on January 16, 1837, the vessel came to rest and the Expedition was officially disbanded. One of the most ironical incidents of the whole survey was the receipt of an order from Bombay, just after the *Euphrates* had been laid up and her crew discharged, directing that the work of surveying and opening up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers be continued until further notice. This tardy assumption of control by the Bombay Government came too late, however, and several months elapsed before a new force under new auspices could resume the work.⁶⁶ Most of the disbanded personnel of the original Expedition proceeded overland on camels from Bagdad to Beirut, whence they reached England by way of Malta at the end of May, 1837.⁶⁷ The *Euphrates*, now transferred to the Indian Government, was not taken to the Indus River, as originally planned, but was left at Bagdad in temporary charge of an English consular agent, Mr. Alexander Hector. This aggressive young man, far from seeing in the dissolution of the Expedition the end of British enterprise in Mesopotamia, saw instead only the commencement. He presently undertook the establishment of a mercantile house in this old commercial entrepôt and made a distinct success of it.⁶⁸

Chesney reached England in August, 1837, realizing that the immediate opening of the Euphrates route, at least in the manner he had advocated, was a forlorn hope. His final recommendations to the Board of Control added nothing essential to reports sent back from time to time during the course of the survey.⁶⁹ His optimism with regard to the Euphrates line was not shared by members of the British and Indian Governments, by the public, or even by several of Chesney's own officers.⁷⁰ The lack of enthusiasm arose from the fact that from the original organization of the Expedition in England in 1834 to the embarkation of

in particular, had lost no opportunity to undermine the Expedition and the Euphrates Expedition in favor of the Suez passage.

⁶⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 55-56, 62-63; *Ann. Reg.*, 1837, Pt. II, 52; Chesney, *op. cit.*, p. 332; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

⁶⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 72.

⁶⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 56; *Annual Register*, 1837, Pt. II, 52 ff.; Layard, *Autobiography*, I, 331.

⁶⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 51-54; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-363; Chesney, *Expedition for the Survey of the Euphrates and Tigris*, II, 600-601, 673-686.

⁷⁰ See the statement by Capt. J. B. B. Estcourt in *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, p. 61.

the survivors at Beirut in 1837 its whole course had been marked by delays, accidents, and disappointments. Of the nineteen officers originally commissioned, only seven were with the Expedition at its close; and but thirteen out of the original force of seventy-five Englishmen remained to be disbanded.⁷¹ Death, discharge, and special missions had taken a heavy toll. Starting with high hopes and the confidence of officialdom, it ended in reproach, disowned alike by the British and Indian Governments.

The cost of the survey was not one of the least of the charges against it. In 1834 Chesney had estimated the probable maximum expense of the undertaking at £13,000, which was then considered a plausible amount by members of the British Cabinet and others. In order to provide for possible contingencies and to make possible a thorough experiment unhampered by lack of funds, Parliament and the East India Company appropriated at various times some £30,000. Yet at the breaking up of the Expedition in January, 1837, the experiment had cost more than £43,000, exclusive of some £2000 which Chesney had expended from his private funds.⁷² Yet not one piece of mail from India had been delivered in England the sooner.⁷³ In view of these shortcomings, it is not strange that a host of critics lost no opportunity of heaping opprobrium on the Euphrates idea and its principal exponent.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the Euphrates Expedition was far from being the total failure generally believed. From the scientific point of view, it added a great deal of knowledge of the geography of western Asia. The existing commerce along ancient highways was computed and future trade opportunities were estimated. Strategic locations were considered, together with the political

⁷¹ *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, VII, 411, 412; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 62-66; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. I, 237-248; Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 294.

⁷² *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 540, pp. 64-66. By various economies, this was actually reduced to a trifle less than £40,000. Chesney and one of his officers served entirely without pay. Chesney, *Narrative*, pp. 374-377, Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 311.

⁷³ A Bombay journal, in sarcastic vein, commented on this in the following "halting lines":—

"Let us set up three lines instead of one
Ere the Red Sea line has fairly begun;
Oh! weep by the waters of Babylon
O'er two lakhs spent and still more to pay,
Besides a few mails that have gone astray."

Quoted in James Douglas, *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India*, p. 134.

⁷⁴ James Barber, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir John Cam Hobhouse*, (London, 1837), pp. 5, 6; Capt. Melville Grindlay, *A View of the Present State of the Question as to Steam Communication with India . . .* (London, 1837), p. 10.

value of routes traversing Syria and Mesopotamia.⁷⁵ A more important result was the reëstablishment by the Indian Government of the dromedary land route from Basrah across the desert regions to Damascus and Beirut. This was designed to serve two of the purposes for which the Euphrates Expedition had been organized, namely, to keep a hand on the general political situation in Asiatic Turkey and in Persia, where war was looming up, and to develop lines which might be used for the rapid transmission of important despatches between Bombay and London, should the route through Egypt be closed for any reason. Before 1840 the eastern terminus of the line had been shifted from Basrah to Mohammerah, whence a fast fortnightly service to the Mediterranean *via* Bagdad and Damascus was maintained in spite of plundering Arabs.⁷⁶

The principal count that can be brought against the Euphrates survey lies in the fact that it postponed for a time the development of a route the utility of which had already been proved and which was badly needed — that by way of Egypt and the Red Sea. But even this suspension of activity was of brief duration. Following the long delays in 1835 and 1836 in getting the survey of the Euphrates River actually under way, governmental attention quickly reverted to the Red Sea line which lacked only a sufficient quota of ocean steamships and an arrangement with the Viceroy of Egypt to be made effective. New steamships for the Red Sea line were put under construction in 1836, and by the end of the Euphrates Expedition they were almost ready for service. On June 10, 1837, another Select Committee of the House of Commons was authorized, "to inquire into the best Means of establishing a Communication by Steam with India by way of the Red Sea."⁷⁷ Evidence presented before the new Committee practically ignored the Euphrates surveys and the revived dromedary post road through Mesopotamia as well. All matters pertaining to the use or development of lines extending between Syria and the Persian Gulf were left to the East India Company and the Indian Presidencies.

The report of the Committee of 1837, given in on July 15, did little more than sanction arrangements which were already well under way for the inauguration of a new steam service between Bombay and Suez. It ran, in part, as follows:

⁷⁵ Cf. *Geographical Journal*, XLI (1913), 246-248.

⁷⁶ *Bombay Courier*, 3 Jan., 1837; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 159, 294-5; Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, I, 309, 310, *passim*; Rev. Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia, and Mesopotamia* . . . (2 vols., New York, 1840), II, 188-189. The communication between Bagdad and India remained somewhat irregular, depending chiefly upon the arrival of steamers in the Persian Gulf, while it was kept up at definite intervals with Beirut and Constantinople.

⁷⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, p. iv.

Your Committee have learned with much gratification that arrangements have been entered into between Her Majesty's Government and the East India Company for the establishment of a Monthly Communication by Steam from Suez to Bombay, and they hail with satisfaction the liberal spirit in which the Court of Directors have met the propositions of Her Majesty's Government for thus affording a direct intercourse with one portion of the continent of India, and facilitating a communication for Letters with all the Presidencies.

Inasmuch as . . . a direct communication by Steam from the Red Sea to Ceylon, Madras and Bengal, would be practicable at all seasons of the year by the employment of vessels of adequate tonnage and power; and as, under judicious arrangements, such extended establishments would appear to offer a prospect of an adequate return for the increased outlay, by the conveyance of Passengers, and of some valuable articles of Merchandize, which cannot be expected from the limited communication with Bombay alone; Your Committee feel bound to recommend a continued and zealous attention to the subject on the part of Her Majesty's Government and the East India Company. . .⁷⁸

This recommendation was fully carried out while the political situation in western Asia and in Egypt was most unsatisfactory.

The Euphrates Expedition as originally constituted broke up at a rather critical moment. The political motives which gave Parliamentary support to the steam survey in 1834 were stronger than ever in 1837.⁷⁹ In view of the avowed designs of Russia and of France, of lukewarmness in Turkey and open opposition in Egypt, Persia, and Afghanistan, and of war clouds looming up in far-off China, British officialdom was loath to terminate all national enterprise in Asiatic Turkey.⁸⁰ The attempts of the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, M. Boutenieff, to have British commercial privileges in Mesopotamia cancelled added much to British firmness. This wily Russian diplomat at one time appeared to be making some real headway with his protests

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

⁷⁹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, XXIII, 864; XXV, 1247, 1253, 1275; *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, N.S., Pt. I, 231; Fontanier, *op. cit.*, II, 206 ff.; *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, V, 297-305; Ross, *Opinions of the European Press on the Eastern Question*, pp. 410-435, *passim*.

⁸⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1841, Nos. [322.], [304.], [323.]; Capt. John Hall, *England and the Orleans Monarchy*, Ch. 7.

against the *firman* of 1834.⁸¹ It was the expressed British view that "Mesopotamia may yet become the soil on which the dominion of the East is to be disputed."⁸² So, in spite of the decision of the Supreme Government of India not to support Chesney's recommendations for steam navigation on the Euphrates, the Board of Control late in 1836 authorized the Bombay Presidency to carry on the work of river navigation until it was adjudged altogether impracticable, which meant until the political horizon had cleared.

There is reason to believe that the India authorities welcomed the opportunity to continue the river surveys under a commander more tractable, obedient, and attentive to the imperial cause than Colonel Chesney had been. A more acceptable officer was found in Lieut. Henry Blosse Lynch. After the dissolution of the Euphrates Expedition, he had been placed in charge of that section of the new Bombay postal line between Bagdad and Damascus, where he had been very successful in having mails transmitted on schedule time.⁸³ Since he was better acquainted with the languages and mannerisms of the peoples of Mesopotamia and Syria than perhaps any other available person, he was selected by the Bombay authorities as commander of a new force, styled "The Expedition to the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers." Lynch thereupon assumed command of the *Euphrates* steamer, pending the arrival of some new, light-draught river steamers, which the Company was having constructed in England.

The next two years were devoted largely to the completion of the surveys of the River Tigris, data being collected at all seasons of the year. These surveys covered the entire course of the river from Armenia to the Persian Gulf, adding considerably to the knowledge of the river and its drainage basin. Considerable attention was given during this work to commercial prospects, which were subsequently exploited by British enterprise.⁸⁴ At the same time, this series of river surveys reaffirmed the political value of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys and added appreciably to British influence in that part of Asia throughout the rest of the century.⁸⁵

During the new series of surveys the Euphrates River was again approached from the Persian Gulf. The first attempt to ascend the river in 1836 had resulted in failure due to the

⁸¹ Ainsworth, *op. cit.*, II, 198. ⁸² *Asiatic Journal*, III, 3d Ser., 77.

⁸³ Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, II, 43.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁸⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837-1838, No. 356, p. 6; *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, IX, 441, 442; J. R. Wellsted, *Travels to the City of the Caliphs, along the Shores of the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean* (2 vols., London, 1840), I, 104-106. See the statement in A. H. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 474.

Lemlum marshes. But in May, 1838, Capt. John C. Hawkins, I.N., in command of the *Euphrates* and with a crew from the Indian Navy's armed cruiser *Clive*, succeeded in passing the marshes after six days of unremitting toil. The river above was ascended without much difficulty to a point about five hundred miles from Basrah, though the nature of the obstacles encountered made the establishment of a regular steam line on the Euphrates appear, as it had earlier, clearly out of the question.⁸⁶

Early in 1839, the Court of Directors sent out to the Persian Gulf three iron river steamers, designed further to establish British influence in Mesopotamia and to make trial of the Arab trade. These were made up in sections in England, loaded on sailing vessels, and despatched as secretly as possible round the Cape of Good Hope to Basrah.⁸⁷ Several months were required to assemble and launch the vessels, and they were not employed until the next year. The spring of 1840, however, saw a flotilla of four steamers bearing British colors on the Shaat-el-Arab. These were the *Assyria*, *Nitocris*, *Nimrod*, and the now decrepit *Euphrates*. The ablest officers of the Indian Navy were selected to man the vessels, upon whose exploits rested much of British reputation in the Middle East. Besides Lieut. H. B. Lynch, there were Lieut. C. D. Campbell, Lieut. Felix Jones, Lieut. H. W. Grounds, and Lieut. Michael W. Lynch, joined later by Capt. W. S. Selby, all of whom acquired enviable records for the performance of difficult enterprises.⁸⁸

Most of the year 1840, a year in which war between Britain and France over Syria seemed more than likely, was given over to the periodic navigation of the Tigris from Basrah to Bagdad with mails, goods, and passengers.⁸⁹ New surveys were resumed in 1841. Capt. Selby made an examination of the Karun River as far as Shuster, including its branches and tributaries.⁹⁰ The Euphrates River was also ascended for a thousand miles by two

⁸⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 277-278; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 43.

⁸⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 72; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 45.

⁸⁸ H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies* (2 vols., London, 1901), II, 440; Budge, *By Nile and Tigris*, I, 224; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 33-35, 45; Chesney, *Narrative*, pp. 547-548. Lieut. H. B. Lynch was invalided to England in July, 1840, and his brother, Lieut. Michael W. Lynch, died at Diarbekr, on his way to England, in 1841. A third brother had perished on the ill-fated *Tigris*. Capt. Selby was badly wounded by Arabs in June, 1841, from the effects of which he died after reaching England. The mortality among the pioneers of British imperialism was exceedingly heavy.

⁸⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1840, No. [323.], Pt. II, 299-300. During the height of the war feeling, Lieut. Lynch transmitted bulletins on the numbers of armed forces in Arabia, which had considerable influence on the policy of the British Foreign Office.

⁹⁰ P. M. Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia* . . . (London, 1902), p. 246; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 47; Layard, *Autobiography*, II, 10; Clive Bingham, *A Ride*

of the steamers under Lieut. Campbell, but although the ascent was made successfully at the time of the spring freshets, the descent, which was delayed until autumn for political reasons, was marred by several serious accidents.⁹¹

These later surveys were almost altogether ignored, both by the British Government and the Government of India. After the several upheavals which ushered in the forties, the Near and Middle East rapidly subsided into relative quiescence, and the presence of armed steamers on the rivers of Mesopotamia for moral purposes was no longer necessary.⁹² These supplementary surveys, however, constitute the bond of union between the attempts to open a through highway between England and India by the original Euphrates Expedition and projects for a British-controlled railway line through the Euphrates Valley, which were very much in evidence in 1856 and 1857.

In 1842 the Expedition for the Survey of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers was formally ended. Pursuant to orders from the Court of Directors, three of the river steamers were withdrawn from Mesopotamia, and were transported, with their officers and crews, to the Indus River by the new and powerful steamer *Semiramis*, which was otherwise engaged in operating the Suez line. It is of some interest to observe that Lieut. Felix Jones, with the *Nilocris*, remained behind to protect British interests at Bagdad and to continue the exploration of the country between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers as opportunity offered. Such surveys were continued, as a matter of fact, by the "Surveyor of Mesopotamia," until the Indian Navy was abolished in 1863, the naval steam forces in the region of the Persian Gulf being augmented as political conditions in Persia and neighboring countries demanded.⁹³

Through Western Asia (2d ed., London, 1897), pp. 159, 160. Selby, who was badly wounded in an affair with the Arabs near Bagdad in June, 1841, gives his own account of the survey in the *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, XIV, 219-246. A. H. Layard, who became prominent years later in diplomatic work, was a member of this surveying party. See his *Early Adventures in Persia, Susiana and Babylonia* . . . (2 vols., London, 1887), II, 341-366.

⁹¹ *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, VI, 169-186; Chesney, *Expedition*, etc., II, 699-706; *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 72-73, 241; Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 244-245; *Hertslet's Com. Treat.*, XIII, 839.

⁹² Budge, *op. cit.*, I, 212; *Morning Chronicle*, 10 Aug., 1841; Chesney, *Narrative*, p. 558; Richard Coke, *Baghdad: the City of Peace* (London, 1927), pp. 270-271.

⁹³ *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, XVIII, 1-19; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 49, 50; Layard, *Autobiography*, II, 10; *Quarterly Review*, CII (1857), 367 (not an accurate account); "Lettre du Grand Vizier au Pacha de Bagdad, relative à la Navigation de l'Euphrate et du Tigre par les Bateaux à Vapeur Anglais, le 2 Avril, 1846," in *Hertslet's Com. Treat.*, XIII, 839, 840. The work of Lieut. Jones was later supplemented by that of A. C. Holland, commanding the new armed steamer *Comet*, stationed in the Persian Gulf primarily for moral reasons.

CHAPTER VIII

PAVING THE WAY TO INDIA

OF THE many surveys made along the routes to India in the nineteenth century, that of the original Euphrates Expedition was doubtless the most spectacular. In some respects, however, it was not the most important. Scientific information had been collected and geographical and commercial conditions had been noted, but no practicable line of communication had been opened up by the Expedition. The surveys which were more resultful to this end and which contributed most directly to the opening of new lines of transit were those conducted by the members of the naval force attached to the Bombay Presidency, which was known during most of its history as the Bombay Marine.

The origin of this unique service dates from the earliest days of the East India Company's activities. At the very outset all vessels of the Company were heavily armed and no discrimination was made among them for naval duty. But in 1612 a marine establishment was created, principally for the purpose of protecting the Company's Indian factories from the Portuguese, and this laid the foundation for a separate naval force later on.¹ Soon after the acquisition of the Island of Bombay, all of the Company's naval forces in the East were centred at this strategic port, and the Bombay Government retained control of the Marine until its final dissolution on April 30, 1863.² During this long period the character of the work assigned to the Marine varied greatly from time to time as conditions in eastern waters changed and the interests of the Company fluctuated, but throughout its

¹ Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, I, 16; *Parliamentary Paper*, 1852-1853, No. 627, p. 145. Low was one of the officers of the Indian Navy who outlived the establishment and was later entrusted with writing its history from such papers as remained in the archives of the Company. Most of the early records were destroyed at the time of the abolition of the service.

² Low, *op. cit.*, I, 54 ff., II, 569-571; *Asiatic Journal*, III, N.S., Pt. II, 86. On 1 May, 1830, the official name of the service was changed from "Bombay Marine" to "Indian Navy."

history it remained one of the leading features of the Company's organization in staking out, protecting, and developing the Empire of India.

Upon this Service fell the duty of protecting both European and Indian merchant shipping in the East from enemies and from the swarms of pirates which had flourished in those waters for many centuries. Coupled with this was the task of suppressing, as far as possible, the trade in slaves, which had long been a leading activity of the Mohammedan peoples inhabiting the regions around the Arabian Sea. Also the excluding of European interlopers from Indian waters was a large item in the routine work of the Marine.³ The conditions, both moral and physical, under which these duties were performed produced by sheer process of elimination a magnificent marine force while the territories belonging to the Company were still few and scattered. The strenuous nature of the work also produced a set of traditions such as always attach to an organization performing difficult tasks in a courageous manner. Even the Royal Navy could show no greater spirit of loyalty or devotion to duty than the Bombay Marine, although the exploits of the latter were never widely known in the mother country. The Company did not make a practice of lauding its servants, and these carried on their work in regions so remote and so little known that their exploits rarely attracted attention. Outside of the Company's own sphere, little notice was given the fact that during the wars of the eighteenth century the Marine furnished able assistance on many occasions in eliminating the French from Indian waters.⁴ Bare mention is made in English chronicles of the part played by this force in the undoing of Napoleon Bonaparte in Egypt by conveying Indian troops to Egypt, cutting off access to India by sea, and by establishing offensive and defensive positions. It was by these and other performances that the units of the Service pacified the eastern seas, made them into highways of trade and communication, and eventually rendered themselves no longer necessary.

Not nearly all of the work performed by the Bombay Marine in promoting the Company's interests was military or naval in character. During the eighteenth century it became a scientific as well as a fighting Service, and it was in this connection that the Marine contributed most to the linking up of England and India. As early as 1772 scientific surveys of the coasts of India, the adjacent coasts of Persia and Arabia, and some of the island

³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, p. 145, evidence given by James Cosmo Melvill before a Select Committee of the House of Lords.

⁴ Low recounts many such incidents.

groups in the Indian Ocean were undertaken by the Government of India and carried out by the marine officers of the Bombay Presidency.⁶ These surveys, which had as their purpose not merely the collection of data to be entered on sailing charts but information concerning the lands and peoples proximate to the Indian Ocean as well, were carried on steadily until the wars with revolutionary France interrupted them. After the ending of the French menace in Egypt and the illusory Peace of Amiens, they were recommenced in 1804 and carried on until almost every mile of the shore line between India and Africa had been laid down on accurate, large-scale maps and the commercial potentialities of the countries adjacent estimated.⁶

Before the opening of the nineteenth century, all surveys had been more or less casual since their object was to reduce the dangers of navigation. The Napoleonic Expedition to Egypt in 1798 and the presence of French troops in that country for some years thereafter suggested the need for more detailed information concerning the shores of the Red Sea. Besides, the great increase in navigation during the late eighteenth century made it imperative that additional knowledge be obtained and more accurate charts be made of extensive sections of coast bounding the Arabian Sea which had not been delineated before.

In 1803, therefore, the Governor-General of India, Lord Wellesley, authorized the sending of the vessels of the Marine to explore the Red Sea. This survey was entrusted at his own request to George, Viscount Valentia, who had gone out to India in 1802. It was his purpose to sail up the African shore of the Red Sea, for he "felt it as a national reflection, that a coast which had afforded a profitable and extensive trade in gold, ivory, and pearls, to the sovereigns of Egypt, should be a perfect blank in our charts."⁷ This voyage was made in the *Antelope*, a vessel of the Bombay Marine commanded by a Captain Keys, but while the mouth of the Red Sea and adjacent ports were examined at some length, the expedition failed to accomplish much because of a feud which developed between Lord Valentia and the Captain. The survey was therefore abruptly broken off.⁸ It was continued in December, 1804, by the cruiser *Panther*. Some progress was made at intervals until 1806, by which time the situation in Egypt appeared no longer to call for such expensive precautionary measures. There was little trade at this time be-

⁶ Low, *op cit.*, I, 185.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, Ch. XII; *Parl. Pap.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, p. 146.

⁷ George, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels*, II, 4.

⁸ Lord Valentia has given in great detail the account of the voyage and its difficulties in his *Voyages and Travels*, II, 7-85.

tween India and Red Sea ports, that of the eighteenth century having largely fallen off.⁹

Soon after the surveys of the Red Sea had been begun, the many and obvious advantages to be obtained from a more thorough knowledge of the Indian Seas and the countries beyond them led to the creation of a new and important post in the Indian Administration, that of Marine Surveyor-General. Surveys of Indian waters did not begin to assume a very important character, however, until the appointment of Capt. Daniel Ross as Marine Surveyor-General in 1823. In the decade which his service covered, he justly earned the title of "Father of Indian Surveys," and through his far-sighted and careful administration of his duties he laid British interests throughout the East under permanent obligation.¹⁰

In 1828 Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay, determined to undertake a series of experimental voyages with the object of establishing a permanent steam communication between Bombay and Suez. This program necessitated a new inspection of headlands, channels, and way stations, as well as the allocation of suitable fuel depots for the proposed steamers, one of which was then being constructed at Bombay. In order to provide more readily the facilities needed for steam communication, the Marine force was partially reorganized and transformed. The new arrangement made both officers and enlisted men liable for any kind of duty either on the standard armed sailing vessels of the Marine or on the steam vessels about to be added. This change was exceedingly unpopular with the Marine force, whose traditions were intimately bound up with the handling of stanch sailing ships. The liability of service on the small, unsightly, and noisy steamers of the time, complicated in manipulation, foul with soot and dust from burning a low grade of coal, and very limited in radius of action, was considered a deep humiliation. Nevertheless, in no great time, the steam arm of the Marine greatly widened its usefulness and contributed much to the growth of British hegemony throughout the East.

This change in the functions of the Service was followed by an appropriate change in name. From May 1, 1830, the Marine was officially designated the Indian Navy, an appellation earned by more than two centuries of distinguished service.¹¹ Much of the

⁹ See the "Progress of Maritime Surveys," in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, I, 327.

¹⁰ Sir Clements R. Markham, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys* (2d ed., London, 1878), pp. 8-10.

¹¹ Low, *op. cit.*, I, 532. Cf. *Parl. Pap.*, 1900, [Cd. 131], "Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Administration of the Expenditure of India," pp. 114-119.

Navy's work after this date consisted not merely in the charting of maritime channels and coast lines, but in the "pacification" of maritime native states and the acquisition of ports and coaling stations by other means than purchase or negotiation. For these phases of the development of new lines of communication the Indian Navy was well adapted.

The program of land and marine surveys inaugurated in 1828 occupied the attention of the Indian Navy for nearly a generation and made possible the development of regular steam lines covering long distances in eastern seas before there was any comparable service in European waters. The first step in developing these lines was taken with the despatching of Commander Robert Moresby to explore the group of small islands off the Malabar coast of India known as the Laccadives. Here in this myriad of islands it was thought good harbors might be found offering protection, fresh water, and suitable coaling stations for steamers *en route* from Calcutta or Madras to the Persian Gulf or Red Sea. Careful investigation failed to disclose any such promising locations, however, and this island group, extending from 10° to 14° North Latitude, was thereafter almost totally neglected.¹²

Meanwhile, Sir John Malcolm was completing his plans for a steam line from Bombay to Suez. Under his instructions a steam vessel was put under construction in one of the Bombay shipyards. This vessel, built of India teak and fitted with engines and boilers from England, and christened the *Hugh Lindsay*, was ready for service in 1829. In order to test the plan of making regular voyages to Suez it was necessary that coal depots be established and navigation charts of the Red Sea be prepared as rapidly as possible. Early in 1829, Commander Moresby was withdrawn from his survey of the Laccadives and was despatched from Bombay in the armed cruiser *Thetis* to "determine the best course at all seasons for steamers proceeding from Suez."¹³ This was a large order, considering the difficulties inherent in the Red Sea, and the survey could not be entirely completed for several years.

The expedition, consisting of the *Thetis* and a brig consort carrying a supply of coal, set out in due time for the Red Sea. While new navigation maps were being prepared, supplies of coal were deposited at various ports in the Red Sea and at Suez.¹⁴ On the return voyage to India, the brig was wrecked and lost on an

¹² J. Stanley Gardiner, in *The Oxford Survey of the British Empire* (Ed. by A. J. Herbertson and O. J. R. Howarth), (London, 1914), II (Asia), Chap. 9, *passim*. Commander Moresby was the brother of the Admiral of the British fleet, Sir Fairfax Moresby.

¹³ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 68-69; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, O. S., 339, 622.

¹⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, O.S., 339, 506, 759. See the *India Gazette*, 5 March, and the *Bengal Chronicle*, 12 March, 1829.

uncharted island in the Red Sea, which untoward incident had the effect of hastening plans for a complete survey and charting of that long body of water. Immediately upon the return of the *Thetis* to Bombay in March, 1830, a more effective surveying expedition was formed. Moresby was commissioned to chart the northern half of the Sea from Suez to Jeddah in the *Palinurus*, while one of his fellow officers, Capt. Elwon, was ordered to perform a similar task for the southern half in the *Benares*, both vessels being detached from the usual duties of the Marine for this purpose.¹⁵ With some intermissions, the triangulation survey thus begun was continued for four years, every part of the Sea being carefully explored. The personnel of this expedition consisted largely of carefully selected young officers from the Bombay Marine, who found in this enterprise a valuable school of experience. Almost all who survived the exceedingly trying conditions under which the work was carried on distinguished themselves later in the cause of steam communication.¹⁶

The survey of the Red Sea was followed by careful chartings of the southern coasts of Arabia, including some of the neighboring island groups. Especial attention was given to the Island of Socotra, which was considered by the Bombay Government as affording a logical place for the establishment of coal and water depots on the steam line to Suez.¹⁷ The survey of Socotra was entrusted to Commander Stafford B. Haines, who terminated his work in less than a year chiefly because of the protests of the Sultan of Fartash, one of the Arab chieftains of the mainland, who exercised authority over the island. But such an attitude was not permitted long to interfere with plans for steam communication. Capt. Daniel Ross was immediately sent out to negotiate with the Sultan and his relatives, with the object of securing for the Indian Government the right of landing coal and supplies at one or more of the harbors on the island. Capt. Ross, by a judicious use of persuasion and determination, succeeded in obtaining an Agreement whereby the British were accorded the desired

¹⁵ During the work of the International Scientific Commission in 1855, "it was found that all the charts hitherto published of the roadstead of Suez were inaccurate with the exception of that by Commander Moresby, published in 1837." *New Facts and Figures Relating to the Isthmus of Suez Canal*, by Barthelmy St. Hilaire (Ed. by F. de Lesseps), p. 9.

¹⁶ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 70-72; Markham, *op. cit.*, p. 15. Several of these men lived to see the end of the Service to which they had devoted their lives.

¹⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, Min. of Ev., p. 10; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 75. In April, 1835, the *Hugh Lindsay* touched at Socotra for the first time *en route* from Suez to Bombay with mails from England which had been brought to Alexandria in the steamer *African* belonging to the British Admiralty. This line of communications was in definite, though not regular, operation by this time.

rights.¹⁸ Immediately after the departure of Capt. Ross, however, vessels of the Indian Navy experienced difficulty in securing the promised privileges at Socotra, and it became evident that the Arabs had little intention of fulfilling their promises. In order to settle the matter effectually, Commander Haines was supplied with the sum of 10,000 German crowns for the purchase of the island, while "in anticipation of success" a small fleet and force of marines was made ready to occupy the island after the purchase had been consummated.¹⁹ This force reached Socotra in 1835, where Haines lost no time in opening negotiations with the Sultan, who was at that moment on the island. Even in view of the imposing force brought from India, the Sultan doggedly refused to sell the island or any part of it. This emergency had been anticipated, however, and the marine force which had been sent out ostensibly to take peaceable and lawful possession of Socotra proceeded to occupy its strategic positions without leave.²⁰

The British occupation of the island was of short duration. The harbors, having shallow and dangerous bars, were all found to be unsuited to the needs of steam vessels. The water supply was insufficient both in quantity and quality for European troops or passing vessels. But the decisive factor was that of disease. Immediately after the occupation began, fevers and other ills attacked the force of occupation with such virulence that in a short time only a small number of marines remained fit for active duty. In November, 1835, Socotra was evacuated by the British force, which returned to Bombay, each of the transports having the character of a hospital ship.²¹

This practically ended the serious consideration of Socotra as a major base of operations in the development of steam transit. The island was mentioned for several years as being capable of development, but in the meantime better posts had been found.

¹⁸ C. U. Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, VII, 189. The text of the Agreement is given on page 191. See the *Asiatic Journal*, XVI, N.S., Pt. II, 10, containing an item from the *India Gazette*, 15 July, 1834.

¹⁹ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 189.

²⁰ This action became the subject of a good deal of controversy within a few years, it being insisted in some quarters that Haines had not exhausted peaceful measures when the armed occupation was determined upon. Haines gives his own version in a "Memoir of the South and East Coast of Arabia," in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, XV, 104-160. See *Asiatic Journal*, XVII, N. S., Pt. II, 22.

²¹ *Asiatic Journal*, XX, N.S., Pt. II, 90, an account based on an item in the *Bombay Courier* of 2 Nov., 1835. Aitchison says (*op. cit.*, VII, 189) that the troops were withdrawn because of the failure of the negotiations for the purchase of the island. There appears to be little doubt, however, that the occupation would have been permanent, as was that of Aden a few years later, had the island offered the proper facilities for steam vessels.

Socotra was largely ignored thereafter until late in the century, when the possibility of the seizure and fortification of the island by a European enemy became so great that the island could no longer be safely left alone. In 1876, following British overtures, the then Sultan bound himself and his heirs never to cede or lease the island to any but the British, and in 1886 it was declared under protection, "largely owing to the piratical tendencies of its inhabitants."²²

While Socotra was being surveyed, the Persian Gulf was re-examined. The first survey had been commenced in 1820 under Capt. Guy in the *Discovery* and Capt. Brucks in the *Psyche*. Capt. Guy soon retired, but the survey under Brucks and others lasted almost ten years.²³ The Euphrates Expedition and the possibility of opening a line of communications between India and England through Mesopotamia gave new point to the inspection of the Gulf and the Shaat-el-Arab. At the same time, the Maldive Islands, a numerous group extending between 7° North Latitude and 1° South Latitude were scientifically examined by Capt. Robert Moresby and his subordinates.²⁴ Also the Kuria Muria group were surveyed and charted. Likewise attempts were made at the behest of the Supreme Government at Calcutta to find a navigable channel between Ceylon and the Indian mainland, but this was without success. A passage had to be blasted through Adam's Bridge, the natural barrier reef, years later.²⁵

In 1837 and 1838, Lieut. Carless of the Indian Navy surveyed Kurrachee and much of the adjacent coast, a work which was immediately of practical value in connection with British operations against Persia.²⁶ Simultaneously, land parties, detached for special service from the Navy, were engaged in spying out the interior of Turkish Arabia and southern Persia. The Arab tribes inhabiting these maritime districts had long before become objects of concern to the Indian Government through their plun-

²² Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 189; Gardiner in *The Oxford Survey of the British Empire*, II, 335. It is quite probable that the protectorate was declared, not so much because of piracy, which had largely been stamped out long before, as because of the rapidly developing German habit of appropriating such eastern lands and islands as were not already under European control. Socotra is still nominally ruled by an Arab Sultan.

²³ Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

²⁴ Lieuts. Young and Christopher, "Memoir on the Inhabitants of the Maldive Islands," in the *Journal of the Bombay Geographical Society*, I, 54 ff.

²⁵ Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18; *Parl. Pap.*, 1862, No. 266 "Report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into . . . the practicability of Shortening the Voyage to Her Majesty's Possessions in Madras, Bengal, and Burmah, by facilitating the Passage through the Obstruction known as Adam's Bridge, and thereby avoiding the Circumnavigation of Ceylon."

²⁶ Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.

dering propensities, and as far as naval strength was concerned their power had already been broken. These land surveys had as their immediate objects the gathering of both geographical and political information, while commercial possibilities always came in for careful investigation.²⁷

While British Indian surveys were in progress during the thirties, the western part of the Arabian peninsula was being subjected by the troops of the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali. This was the first step in that plan of aggrandizement which was to bring him into open conflict with his liege, the Sultan, and to provoke a dangerous European crisis at the end of the decade.²⁸ Fear of Egyptian prowess was so general throughout Arabia during these years that it is probable that Englishmen, representing a country reputed to be opposed to the schemes of Mehemet Ali, were suffered to pass in safety through parts of western Asia which would normally have been closed to them. At the same time, it would be difficult to overestimate the hazards incurred by those intrepid officers, who, singly or in pairs, penetrated into practically every part of western Asia within the span of a few years and gave the world the first definite information of the geography and inhabitants of these regions.²⁹ The objects of these exploits were ostensibly scientific; yet the importance attached to such missions by the Indian and British Governments and the expense and labor involved in carrying them out throws much light on their ulterior purposes.

Several of the surveys on the mainland carried on under the auspices of the Indian Navy have already been alluded to.³⁰ Messrs. Elliott and Bowater were engaged in exploring the Tigris River until the tragic death of the latter near Mosul in 1830. Elliott was then presently attached to the Mesopotamian survey under Lieut. Henry Ormsby, and the investigation of the lower Tigris was continued for some time.³¹ The Euphrates Expedition under Col. Chesney and his successor, Lieut. H. Blosse Lynch,

²⁷ The account of the many negotiations with Arab tribes is perhaps given best in Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds*. It is not difficult to trace the British occupation of Egypt and the partial partition of Persia and Syria to the growth of the same interests which first prompted maritime and land surveys and the extension of the *pax Britannica* in the regions touched by the Arabian Sea.

²⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, N.S., Pt. II, 22.

²⁹ D. G. Hogarth, *The Penetration of Arabia*, pp. 104 ff.; G. F. Sadlier, *Diary of a Journey across Arabia* (Bombay, 1866).

³⁰ See above, pp. 151, 181-182.

³¹ "Note Accompanying a Survey of the Tigris between Ctesiphon and Mosul," in the *Journal of the Royal Geog. Soc. of London*, IX, 441 ff.

gave occupation to several members of the Indian Navy.³² Meanwhile, Lieut. James Wellsted investigated the interior of Arabia from the coast of Hadramaut to Palestine, studying the habits of different Arab groups and carrying to them the intimations of British power.³³

But these ventures were not confined to the countries of western Asia nor exclusively to members of the Bombay Marine or Indian Navy. Interest in the countries immediately beyond the "gates" of India, stimulated by Russian moves in that direction, led to investigations there. Lieut. John Wood, I.N., devoted the greater part of two years to the penetration of the wild and unknown mountain region to the north of India, the only written account of which was ascribed to the Venetian traveller and merchant of the thirteenth century, Marco Polo.³⁴ Lieut. Arthur Conolly, who was attached to the Company's military forces rather than to the Navy, pushed through the passes leading from India into Afghanistan and Persia, pursuing his adventurous travels even into the confines of Russia.³⁵ That he emerged unscathed seems almost miraculous in view of the enormous hazards encountered. His work was materially supplemented by the dauntless Sir Alexander Burnes in Afghanistan at a critical moment in the relations between that wild frontier state and the Indian Government.³⁶ Burnes was one of the early victims of the hostilities which broke out soon after the completion of his work and which he had done everything in his power to avert. Still others, acting under orders or as private adventurers, disappeared into the mountains and deserts and for months or years were lost to view. Indeed, some of them never emerged again, and the manner of their fate was only to be guessed by the rumors which, sometimes years afterward, drifted across the mountain barriers into Indian frontier settlements.

In this manner, the sphere of British dominion centring in

³² Lieut. H. Blossc Lynch, "Memoir of the River Euphrates . . ." in the *Journal of the Bombay Geog. Soc.*, IV, 169 ff.

³³ James R. Wellsted, *Travels to the City of the Caliphs, along the Shores of the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean* . . . (2 vols., London, 1840); *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, pp. 32-35.

³⁴ Lieut. John Wood, *A Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Source of the River Oxus . . . in the Years 1836, 1837 and 1838* (London, 1841).

³⁵ Lieut. Arthur Conolly, *Journey to the North of India, through Russia, Persia and Afghanistan*. (2d ed., rev., 2 vols., London, 1838).

³⁶ Sir Alexander Burnes, *Cabool: being a Personal Narrative of a Journey to and Residence in that City, in the Years 1836, 1837 and 1838* . . . (London, 1842). See also his *Travels in Bokhara . . . and Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore* . . . in the years 1831, 1832 and 1833 (London, 1834); J. W. Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers, Illustrative of the History of the Civil and Military Services of India* (2 vols., London, 1867), II, 7 ff.; *Asiatic Journal*, XXV, N.S., Pt. II, 23.

India insidiously widened its scope and took cognizance of political and geographical relationships that communications and commercial interests might be protected and extended. These missions of British officers seldom deceived those among whom they were made. That long travels should be undertaken for purely scientific reasons in countries difficult of access and exceedingly dangerous to traverse was inconceivable to the cynical oriental, not so much because his conception of science was so meagre as because his knowledge of human nature was so profound. Proffers of commercial advantages were little more convincing, if more reasonable; for trade on a considerable scale was obviously out of the question where roads did not exist or where there was little to exchange. Besides, did not all British travellers bring official documents sealed with the marks of Government, and did not that argue an official — probably a political — interest in the work of such agents? It is not to be wondered at that several of those who ventured beyond the confines of the British *raj* were treated as spies and were killed or plundered or enslaved or imprisoned. The characteristic attitude of the peoples of western Asia toward the English is well illustrated by the words of an old Arab sheik, who frankly said to one of the members of Chesney's Euphrates Expedition, "The English are like ants: if one finds a bit of meat, a hundred follow."³⁷

The series of surveys carried on by men belonging to the Naval, Military, and Civil Services in India ended rather abruptly in 1838 due to an unusual combination of fortuitous circumstances. The military and civil sections of the Indian Government were suddenly compelled to devote their whole energies to a series of eastern wars which lasted for a considerable period. However, the termination of the surveys came too late seriously to injure their practical benefits. Already they had been so successful in demonstrating the practicability of steam lines between Indian ports and Suez that by 1838 the line was in fairly regular use.³⁸

Steam lines and changes in eastern conditions led the Court of Directors in 1838 to adopt a new policy for the whole of the Indian Navy. The Service was to be placed on the basis of steam rather than sails, and to be devoted primarily to the transportation of mails and passengers on the line to Europe.³⁹ To make this change effective, the Superintendent of the Indian Navy was instructed to publish an Order, which read in part as follows:

³⁷ W. F. Ainsworth, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, II, 197.

³⁸ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 50-52.

³⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, p. 146.

The conveyance of mails for packet service being provided for, the remaining purposes which the Indian Navy would be required for are, against an enemy in case of war, for the transport of troops, stores, and treasure, the protection of the trade from piracy, and for surveying; and . . . we have no doubt that all these objects would be attained more effectually by steam than by sailing vessels, [and] it is our intention to effect the arrangement with the least possible delay. . . .⁴⁰

An entire new set of regulations was issued at the same time, completely transforming the old Navy into a mixed Service and destroying at one blow a host of dearly cherished traditions.⁴¹ Almost simultaneously the office of Marine Surveyor-General was abolished and a new Steam Department created under the Bombay Government. It was evident at once that in the Indian Navy the emphasis was to be placed thereafter on transporting mails and passengers rather than in conducting scientific surveys or in policing the southern shores of Asia, although these remained contingent duties. There can be little doubt that these alterations in the Navy were amply justified by the importance to which steam navigation had risen, but they were bitterly opposed by almost the entire force of officers and enlisted men who felt themselves disgraced and insulted by the nature of their new duties.⁴² Many proud spirits preferred to withdraw from the Service rather than to endure what they considered dishonor. Most of the abler officers remained, however, and although they found their new work in many respects distasteful, they did it so effectively that their reputations suffered not at all.

One feature of the change was the retirement of Sir Charles Malcolm, brother of the erstwhile Governor of Bombay, from his post as Superintendent of the Indian Navy. During his ten years of service, Sir Charles had devoted his energies mainly to the realization of the program of steam communication formulated by his influential brother, and in retiring he was able to consider his cherished task largely accomplished.⁴³ His successor, Capt. Robert Oliver, was a strict utilitarian and without regard for many of the enterprises performed by the Navy which, how-

⁴⁰ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 59.

⁴¹ In 1862 the Indian Navy ceased entirely to exist as a separate organization.

⁴² Douglas, *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India*, p. 140; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 320.

⁴³ It was a fortunate coincidence that the British Admiral in the Mediterranean during those years was another brother, Sir Pulteney Malcolm, whose hearty co-operation did much to secure the establishment of a steam link between Alexandria and Malta, thereby making effective the steam line to Suez.

ever glorious or scientific, had been exceedingly costly. His policy, therefore, was to cut down expenses and to put the Navy, as far as possible, on a paying basis. This was another bitter pill to the personnel of the Service, who felt that they were being compelled to turn merchant. Plans for materially reducing the personnel and even for demoting some of the officers were prevented by the outbreak of hostilities in several quarters about the same time, and such measures as looked toward the emasculation of the Navy were postponed.⁴⁴

The changes made at Bombay in 1838 interrupted little prospecting work of importance, for the purposes of the several surveys both on sea and land had already largely been accomplished. Western Asia was no longer a closed book, a region of conjecture, known only through the writings of the ancients. Within a decade a gap of some fifteen hundred years had been bridged by the enterprise and intrepidity of a handful of men. The results of this work are not easily estimated. It is certain, however, that the surveys largely contributed to the other factors operating at the same time — improved means of communication and transportation, rapid growth of European populations, increasing commercial needs — to bring those countries constituting the "corridor" to India definitely into European politics. No longer might temperamental Mohammedan peoples plunder each other or lightly engage in civil dissension without exciting the apprehension and perhaps provoking the intervention of European states, each jealous lest the other thereby derive some advantage.⁴⁵ Thenceforward, western Asia was to be the scene of such contention among Britain, France, and Russia that their foreign policies must be studied largely in terms of eastern interests. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Turkey and Persia were generally looked upon and treated as independent powers of some importance. By 1840, they had practically become the wards of the great powers of Europe and retained their nominal independence, as they do still, largely because of European rivalries.

Before the Red Sea line of communications with Europe could be considered as established, as numerous trials had shown, a safe and convenient way station was required between Suez and India in which steam vessels might refuel, make minor repairs and find a haven in all cases of emergency. Socotra had at one time been

⁴⁴ Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 24, *passim*. The surveys interrupted in 1838 were resumed at intervals later. Since the creation of the Marine Survey Department of the Government of India in 1875 they have been practically continuous.

⁴⁵ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 73-75, 146-163; *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, pp. 91, 92.

looked upon as the logical base for lines running either to Bombay or to Calcutta, but the brief occupation in 1835 had shown the island to be lacking in several essentials. The Island of Perim, at the Straits of Babelmandeb in the mouth of the Red Sea, had been found at the beginning of the century too barren and disease-ridden to be of the slightest use in connection with the navigation of the Red Sea.⁴⁶ The Maldives and Laccadives had been found deficient in harbor facilities, while the thousands of coral reefs in both groups of islands effectually discouraged navigation in their vicinity. The ports of Mocha and Jedda in the Red Sea, while capable of development, were not well situated for intermediate supply stations, and commercial opportunities alone did not warrant the expenditures which would be necessary for harbor development in either case, even if political complications could be avoided.

Aden was the sole remaining port along the otherwise inhospitable coast of Arabia which appeared to give promise of suitable accommodations for a growing steam service. As early as 1829 the Bombay Government had secured permission from the local Sultan to land coal on an island in the harbor of Aden for the first voyage of the *Hugh Lindsay*. Native labor was hard to obtain, however, and when the steamer had arrived on her first trip it required six days to place on board 180 tons of coal. Largely for this reason, Aden was avoided for several years thereafter, although the Sultan gave evidence of being well disposed toward the English, hoping to secure their assistance against some of his Arab enemies. Commander S. B. Haines, who visited Aden in 1835 in connection with one of his surveys, was struck with the natural advantages of the place, its commodious, well-protected harbor, the ease with which it could be fortified, the quantity and excellence of the fresh water supply, as well as the cordiality of the native population.⁴⁷ These matters he brought to the attention of the Bombay Government upon his return to India, and his report went far toward directing attention to Aden as perhaps the most promising location for a steam supply base.

A timely "incident," which occurred in 1837, seemed to offer an unusual opportunity for the acquisition of Aden as a supply base upon favorable terms. In January of that year, an Indian

⁴⁶ Gardiner, in the *Oxford Survey of the British Empire*, II, 324-345. British authorities did not consider it worth while to extend any formal control over the island, in fact, until 1852, when, with a concession for the construction of a Suez Canal in French hands, it was considered wise to annex the island.

⁴⁷ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 116. An excellent account of the natural advantages of Aden is one by Prof. J. Stanley Gardiner, in *The Oxford Survey of the British Empire*, II, 331-334. Cf. *The Indian Year Book: a Statistical and Historical Annual of the Indian Empire* (London, 1924), pp. 128, 129.

trading vessel named the *Doria Dowlut*, belonging to the Nawab of Madras and sailing under English colors, went aground in the night time near Aden. The vessel carried a rich cargo, valued at more than £20,000.⁴⁸ On the following day, parties of desert Bedouins from Aden came on board the vessel, insulted and mistreated the passengers, several of whom were women, and plundered the vessel of every bit of property which could be removed. The passengers, being without boats, were left to shift for themselves. After a day or so, some of them contrived to build a raft upon which they reached the shore, only to be further mistreated and stripped of all clothing. A few of the passengers who had an interest in the vessel presently managed to obtain passage in another Indian trader to Mocha, where they reported the affair to the Company's native agent. He, however, made light of the affair, and, handing out a few small sums as alms, dismissed the case. However, two vessels of the Indian Navy chanced presently to put in at Mocha, and the agent of the Nawab of Madras, one of the survivors of the wreck, reported the whole affair to the officers of these vessels. Thus the matter was shortly transmitted to Bombay.

Such occurrences as this were not so rare in Arabian waters as to cause particular comment among Government officials in India. A great many similar cases were on record, though because of the activity of the Indian Navy they had been growing less and less frequent. Since the Bombay Government had long before assumed a moral jurisdiction in such cases, and especially since the plundered vessel had sailed under English colors, the line of action pursued by the authorities was that prescribed by numerous precedents, and for the time being no unusual importance was attached to the case.

After a preliminary investigation of the affair, Capt. Haines, who had lately been engaged in surveying in Arabian waters, was despatched to Aden to pursue the matter and to demand an explanation from the Sultan of the Abdalee Arabs, in whose domain the offense was committed. Capt. Haines made a careful examination of the situation and made a report of more than passing interest. In it he stated that there was every reason to believe that the *Doria Dowlut* had come to grief as a result of a conspiracy between the officers of the vessel and the Sultan of Lahej, chief of the Abdalees, whereby the ship had purposely been wrecked in the neighborhood of Aden, the conspirators sharing in the sale

⁴⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, "Correspondence Relating to Aden," pp. 5-7. The name of the wrecked vessel is given in some accounts as the *Deria Dowlet*. Low (II, 116) says the vessel belonged to a niece of the Nawab of the Carnatic (Madras).

of the plunder. It developed that those who removed the cargo from the stranded vessel were in the employ of the Sultan, and the Sultan's son had been among them. Capt. Haines found much of the plunder still exposed for sale by the agent of the Sultan in the markets of Aden. The Sultan, being asked for an explanation, sent word from his capital at Lahej, a few miles inland, that he knew nothing of the matter and assumed no responsibility. This was the situation laid before the Bombay Government in July, 1837.

There is nothing to suggest that until this time the Indian authorities had considered the possibility of using the plunder of the *Doria Dowlut* as a means of advancing British interests. However, at a time when one of the principal topics of interest in all of the Indian Presidencies was the establishment of an adequate steam communication with the home country, and at a moment when two new steamers, lately arrived from England, were actually being groomed for the Suez line with no adequate way station yet in view, the suggestion could scarcely be avoided that perhaps the time was opportune for the acquisition of a naval and supply base at Aden, which was the most advantageous location yet discovered between Suez and Bombay for such a purpose. The first hint that any action of unusual character might be taken is contained in a memorandum by the Secretary of the Bombay Government, dated August 7, 1837. It says:

In consequence of the very serious outrage committed against the people and passengers on board the *Doria Dowlut*, a ship belonging, it is said, to the Nawab of the Carnatic, and sailing under British colours, by the Sultan of Aden, it will probably be requisite for this Government to take strong measures for exacting reparation.⁴⁹

The plan as further matured is contained in a minute of the Governor of Bombay, Sir Robert Grant, dated September 23. This statement, which represented the views of all those connected with the Bombay Government and which was presently approved by both the Supreme Indian Government and the Court of Directors in London, ran, in part, as follows:

The establishment of a monthly communication by steam with the Red Sea, and the formation of a flotilla of armed steamers, renders it absolutely necessary that we should have a station of our own on the coast of Arabia, as we have in the

⁴⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, p. 10.

Persian Gulf; and the insult which has been offered to the British flag by the Sultan of Aden, has led me to inquiries which leave no doubt on my mind that we should take possession of the port of Aden.

I shall make a short summary of the advantages which Aden offers as a depot for coals, and as a naval and commercial station.

Cape Aden is a high rocky promontory, almost an island, the communication with the main [land] being only by a narrow strip of land, which is nearly covered at high-water spring-tides, and which a single work and a few men could maintain against any attack. The village of Aden is situated on the eastern shore, and is surrounded by an amphitheatre of lofty mountains, open to attack from the sea at only one spot, on which a small fort might be required. Opposite to, and commanding, the town of Aden is an island, 1,200 yards long by 700 broad, and 400 feet high, upon which barracks could be built for a detachment of troops. . . The water of Aden is good, and the climate healthy.

The harbour of Aden is excellent, and ruins of great extent prove that it was once a mart of great importance. It might again, under good management, be made the port of export of coffee, gums and spices of Arabia, and the channel through which the produce of England and India might be spread through the rich provinces of Yemen and Hadhar-el-mout. The trade with the African coast would also be thrown into the Aden market.

As a coal depot, no place on the coast is so advantageous; it divides the distance between Bombay and Suez, and steamers may run into Back Bay during the night and unload at all seasons in perfect security.⁵⁰

Before the will of the Court of Directors on the matter of using coercion in obtaining a foothold at Aden had reached India, the Supreme Government authorized the Government of Bombay to proceed with measures designed, first, to secure reparation for the plunder of the *Doria Dowlut*, and in the second place, to secure the harbor and town of Aden, or at least a coaling base, by

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19. The Supreme Government wrote that it was of the opinion "that satisfaction should, in the first instance, be demanded of the Sultan of Aden for this outrage. If it be granted, some amicable arrangement may be made with him for the occupation of this port as a depot for coals, and harbour for shelter. If it be refused, the further measures may be considered." It is pretty evident that by October, 1837, Indian authorities were determined upon securing Aden in one way or another.

purchase. Capt. Haines was selected for this important mission as the man best acquainted with the situation both by reason of his knowledge of the site of Aden and of the susceptibilities of the individuals with whom he would have to deal.

Capt. Haines was despatched in the sloop-of-war *Coote* at the end of the year 1837. Upon arriving at Aden, a formal demand was made for what remained of the property of the *Doria Dowlut* and money compensation for that portion which had been sold. After some delay, these demands were complied with. Such articles as still remained in the markets were given up, and Sultan M. Houssain ben Fudthel very reluctantly gave his bond for 4191 dollars more, the estimated value of the remainder of the cargo.⁵¹ His willingness thus to make amends came from two sources, the certainty that his coast would be blockaded by the English should he not comply, and his fear of the Egyptian troops of Mehemet Ali, who, under Ibrahim Pasha, had already overrun and conquered a large part of Arabia and were at this time not far from Aden.⁵²

The preliminary matter satisfactorily ended, Haines sent presents, accompanied by complimentary notes, to the Sultan and some of his relatives, by way of approaching the more important proposition. The formal statement of the willingness of the Government of India to purchase Aden and the points immediately about it was delivered on January 11, 1838, and occasioned quite a sensation among the Abdallee chiefs. The first reaction to the proposal was not unfavorable, and a number of amicable discussions ensued, both orally and by correspondence. The chief fear of the old Sultan appeared to be that, once he had given up his sole port and concluded the negotiation to the satisfaction of the English, he would thereafter be ignored and left at the mercy of his Arab neighbors. Capt. Haines attempted to quiet his misgivings by presenting to him the draft of a treaty such as would, in all likelihood, be ratified by the Indian Government. This document provided that, in return for a full cession of Aden, the Sultan would be paid a sum to be agreed upon, and would be permitted to reside in Aden, to trade through the port in his own vessels duty free, that he and his family would be treated as

⁵¹ *Parl. Pap.*, No. 268, pp. 20, 27, 36; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 116, 117; Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 122. The original demand was for the payment of 12,000 dollars or its equivalent in goods. The "dollar" referred to was the *rial* or German crown, with a value of about 15 shillings.

⁵² *Asiatic Journal*, XXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 39, 83; *ibid.*, XXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 35; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 117. The Egyptian situation also throws some light on the prompt action of the Indian authorities, who foresaw complications with Egypt, and possibly with Turkey, should Aden be taken by Ibrahim Pasha before the English had established a claim. See John Hall, *England and the Orleans Monarchy*, pp. 232-233.

became their stations, and that the Mohammedan faith would be considered on a parity with Christianity.⁵³ The Sultan asked that he also be taken under British protection, by which he doubtless anticipated an opportunity to prey on his neighbors with impunity, but Haines pointed out that any such engagements would be made separately and only after the Sultan had agreed to the transfer of Aden.

Being threatened on the one side by Egyptian forces together with some of the neighboring Arab tribes, and on the other pressed for an early settlement by Capt. Haines, the Sultan, whose will and determination were not of the strongest, finally agreed to the transfer. The documents which were given to this end, however, in keeping with Arab character and the doubts and fears of the Sultan, were somewhat vague and irregular, probably designed to admit of loose interpretation should the Sultan choose to alter his decision later. The formal transfer of Aden rested on two papers, dated January 22, 1838.⁵⁴ The first of these was a letter, bearing the Sultan's seal, but lacking some of the essentials of a conclusive agreement. This letter, about which there has been much controversy, ran thus:

The Sultan of Aden to Captain Haines. . . You wrote on the subject of Aden; my support and dependence is upon it. My neighbours from east, north, and west obtain money from me, and my dependence for the same is from Aden.

Between us a conversation passed, and we arranged the final answer for two months, or in March. I promised it in two months; and you in the interim go to Bombay and inform your Government, and I will have a council of my chiefs and explain to them. When we have both completed it, and you return in March, you can then make houses or forts or do what you like; the town will then be yours; but consider the money I have to give my neighbors from it, so that when the town is yours, you must answer them all.

If when you are in the town, people come to fight you, either by sea or land, I am not answerable, you must answer and please all. All this which I have written depends upon you. When the town is yours, give me half the custom duties for food. After your return in March, we will meet

⁵³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, pp. 23-25, 29.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 30; Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 122. The date as given by Low (*op. cit.*, II, 117), 23 Jan., is incorrect, having been taken from a collection of treaties (the *Bombay Book of Treaties*, edited by Thomas Hughes, pp. 282-283), in which the date is erroneously given. See *Asiatic Journal*, XXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 35; XXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 39.

and arrange; if you will not give me half the duties, give me pay, either by the month or year, as you please; but let my name be respected, and my orders extend over my own people, and yours over yours. You return in March and settle it.

If you do not come between these months, and the Turks come and take the whole country by strength from me, or any other people, you must not blame me. In March I look only for you, for no other gentleman, but for you, Commander Haines.⁵⁵

This letter, being sealed, might have been accepted as sufficiently binding and inclusive, even though the terms of transfer were not specified definitely. However, it was accompanied by an explanatory note, which not only cast much light on one or two clauses in the transfer, but appeared to make the deed unacceptable. This note was dictated to Haines' interpreter, and said, in part:

You swear by the Bible, the house of the Sultan M. Houssein and his descendants shall be theirs, and that my orders shall extend over my people, and that my houses, and the guns I have in Aden, are to be mine; every other thing to belong to the English. My orders are to be over my people, and the Jews, and the Arabs; and whatever orders I give them they must obey, and my other subjects to be mine, but Aden to belong to the British.⁵⁶

Capt. Haines instantly replied that it was inconceivable that two régimes might exist in Aden side by side, and he pointed out that only British authority might prevail once the transfer became effective. He regretted that the sealed letter did not answer the requirements of a deed. "You say you will transfer Aden to the British," he wrote, "and that we may commence building forts, houses, etc., and do as we think proper; but such an inconsistent course the Government would not carry into effect. They must have the transfer, and money for the same arranged, and concluded under your seal."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ This translation is the one prepared by Haines and forwarded to the Bombay Government with the original.

⁵⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, p. 30.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30. Victor Fontanier, French agent in the Nearer East during these years, quotes Maj. Felix, private secretary of Sir Robert Grant, as saying that he (the Governor of Bombay) recommended that British motives in attempting to secure Aden be not discussed, "since it might cause jealousy among the French." — *Voyage dans l'Inde*, II, 168.

Again pressed to name his terms for the sale of Aden, the Sultan tentatively proposed through the interpreter that an annual subsidy of 50,000 dollars be paid him. Haines replied that this amount was out of the question, the whole of the customs of Aden being not more than 6000 or 7000 dollars per year. The Sultan finally sent word through his son that he was willing to conclude the agreement for an annual stipend of 8700 dollars, an amount quite within the range of Haines' power to offer. Plans were then made for the drawing up of the final documents on January 28 in the town of Aden. On the morning of that day, Capt. Haines was about to go ashore from the *Coote* when he was warned from the shore by his interpreter not to land, as treachery was afoot. It appeared presently that the Sultan, influenced by some of his relatives, had determined to seize Haines, regain possession of both the sealed letter and the bond of restitution for the *Doria Dowlut*, and break off relations with the English altogether. Having obtained sufficient proofs of the plot, Haines sent a final warning to the Sultan, and sailed for Bombay.⁵⁸

With his arrival in India, the whole question of the justification and the expediency of occupying Aden, by force, if necessary, had to be taken up anew. In the months which had intervened since Haines was sent to obtain peaceful possession of the base at Aden, sentiment in official circles had fast been growing in favor of securing it by any means which could be at all explained, this being deemed by some "the only moment when such a step is likely to be practicable for centuries," and the possession of which could not but "be attended with incalculable benefit."⁵⁹ Sir Robert Grant was of this opinion. He had favored direct action in the first instance, but had been overruled by the Supreme Government. Upon receiving Haines' report, he wrote:

While . . . I am for regarding this intended outbreak as in itself a matter of small consequence, there is one view in which it can hardly be overrated; in fact, I cannot but hail it as a most happy incident. It settles conclusively the necessity of our holding the port and harbour of Aden in our own hands, if we mean to avail ourselves of the one as a depot for our coals, and of the other as a shelter for our vessels, whether of war, or transit.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, pp. 26-28, 32-37.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37, quoted from a Minute by the Governor of Bombay.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40. There is an excellent account of the strategic value of Aden in the *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, N.S., Pt. I, 317-321.

The Supreme Government was also inclined to look upon the moment as opportune. To the case created by the looting of a merchant vessel had been added insults to a special agent of the Indian Government, and, finally, a dangerous plot against his person, if not his life.⁶¹ But, happily, there were still other and even less questionable grounds for proceeding with the occupation. Capt. Haines had secured a sealed transfer of the town and port of Aden to the English before quitting the place. It was true that Capt. Haines had thought the document to have no legal value, inasmuch as the consideration for the transfer was not stated, but the fact that an annual sum of 8700 dollars had been verbally agreed upon subsequently was, of necessity, considered as legally completing the transfer.⁶²

Little time was lost in embarking upon a new plan of action. Pending the receipt of permission from the Home Government to capture Aden by force, Capt. Haines was again despatched to Aden in the *Coote* with instructions to renew peaceful negotiations for the completion of the transfer of Aden.⁶³ Meanwhile, naval and military forces were to be collected at Bombay ready to be sent to Aden at the earliest possible moment, in case of the failure of the new overtures. Capt. Haines arrived again at Aden at the first of November, 1838, armed with the draft of a treaty to be presented to the Sultan, M. Houssain. If he had expected to be received more cordially after his absence, he was very quickly undeceived. He was ridiculed by the Arabs of Aden for bringing only one small vessel of war, and was sent insulting and threatening letters by the old Sultan and his son, the latter now acting practically as regent. The Sultan refused to admit that he had ever given any formal bond for the transfer of Aden.⁶⁴ Moreover, he even went so far as to refuse to recognize Haines as an authorized agent of the Indian Government.

While this temporizing was still in progress, the *Coote* was suddenly denied the privilege of receiving fuel and water from the shore. Believing that show of patience further would be a

⁶¹ These were matters of serious concern to the Indian Government, not merely because they gave new grounds for offensive action, but because of the necessity of keeping British prestige always at a high pitch in the East for safety's sake.

⁶² Cf. Fontanier, *op. cit.*, II, 167, 168. Fontanier makes it appear that Mehemet Ali had a hand in the settlement.

⁶³ The Bombay Government wrote to Haines in December, "The Governor in Council considers the importance of obtaining a footing at Aden peaceably, or at all events without loss of life, to be incalculably great in regard to the feeling with which its after occupation by the British Government would be viewed, independently of all other weighty considerations, and that this object should never be lost sight of." *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, p. 61. Comment on so frank a statement seems superfluous.

⁶⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, p. 67.

waste of time, Haines proceeded to blockade the port of Aden, while at the same time sending a request to Bombay by one of the new steamers on the Suez line, asking that the expeditionary force be sent for the forcible seizure of the place. From the beginning of the blockade, communication was kept up in somewhat desultory fashion between the Abdalee chiefs and Capt. Haines, but with relations constantly becoming worse. On November 20 a party of Bedouins fired on the pinnacle of the *Coote*, fortunately without effect. From this time on the state of hostilities was hardly veiled, and it was evident that Bedouins were collecting in Aden in considerable numbers to withstand the expected attack of the English and to harass the *Coote* as much as possible.⁶⁵ A peaceful settlement was clearly out of the question now that the old Sultan was a bed-ridden invalid and his government had fallen into the hands of his sons and their friends, who, being young and irresponsible, and seeing little likelihood of gain from the sale of Aden to the English, desired nothing better than war.

The main expeditionary force for the occupation of Aden arrived on January 16, 1839, consisting of two ships bearing some seven hundred European and native troops and a number of guns. Two small vessels had previously come from India, and a captured Arab vessel had been made into a mortar boat. Capt. Haines immediately sent word of the arrival of the force to the Sultan, whose only reply was for a week's respite in which to decide upon an answer. Since this did not warrant consideration, the little fleet was immediately sent into position for attack. The bombardment of the defenses of the town began at 9:30 A.M. on the same morning, January 16. A brief period of firing knocked to pieces the Arab forts, troops were landed, and by 12:30 the whole peninsula was in the hands of the British. The Sultan, his sons, and most of the Arabs escaped to the mainland, and gave no more trouble for the time being. Medical assistance was offered to all who had suffered during the engagement, and Aden soon returned to its normal condition. Within a few days, friendly negotiations were resumed with the Sultan M. Houssain, who bore his losses in good spirit. On February second, a treaty of peace and friendship was signed between the English and the Abdalees, supplemented by another on the fourth at the request of the old Sultan.⁶⁶ A fortnight later, further to regularize the occupation of Aden, a new treaty of peace and friendship was drawn up, in which the English undertook to forget the recent

⁶⁵ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 117.

⁶⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 268, p. 92; Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 122.

hostilities by engaging to pay the Sultan a yearly stipend of 6500 dollars, and also to assume his tribute obligations to some of the neighboring tribes.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, Aden was made into a regular port of call. Arrangements were made for the coaling of steamers, wharves were repaired, and the defenses of the place carefully looked to, although no further hostilities were anticipated. As it developed, however, the defensive measures were taken none too soon. In November, 1839, the Abdalees, having secretly planned a *coup*, made a series of very effective attacks on Aden, almost gaining an entrance on one or two occasions before they were decisively beaten off. The instalments of the Sultan's stipend were suspended as a result of this, and Aden took on the appearance of a military base. In May and again in July, 1840, heavy attacks were made on the defenses of Aden. Indian reënforcements quickly brought out from Bombay by the new steam units of the Indian Navy gave material aid in these crises, however, and by the end of 1841 the spirit of the Arabs was so broken that no serious difficulties again arose. The Sultan's annuity was again begun in 1844, with a year's back pay as a reward for good behavior. It was a number of years still before the garrisons of Aden could be greatly reduced with safety, though meanwhile the use of Aden as a base had suffered no interruption.⁶⁸

The news of the capture of Aden was received throughout the British world with profound satisfaction. Neither the British nor the Indian Government was inclined longer to deplore the necessity for hostilities, and those who conducted the brief campaign were rewarded with gifts and honors.⁶⁹ Commander Haines was vested with entire discretionary power and made chief officer of the temporary administration. Within the course of a few months several strategic points had been added to the locations originally demanded from the Sultan, new fortifications and batteries had been erected, and Aden became not merely a

⁶⁷ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 136; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 125, 126.

⁶⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. II, 170, 131, 349; *ibid.*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. II, 322; *ibid.*, XXXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 23, 24, 110, 111, 209, 210, 306; Low, *op. cit.*, I, 128-133; Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 123-141.

⁶⁹ See *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. 277, p. 190; Consul-General Campbell's favorable report on the acquisition of Aden. Commander Haines, who was chiefly responsible for the conduct of operations, was rewarded by the Bombay Government with a sword of the value of 200 guineas, while Lieut. E. W. S. Daniell, who was in charge of some of the shore parties, received a sword costing 100 guineas. — *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 306. Fontanier says, however (*op. cit.*, II, 173), that both Lord Palmerston and Sir John Hobhouse protested against the seizure as unwarranted and as a reflection on British honor, but that "no investigation was ever made."

way station on the new steam route to Suez, but one of the defensive bases of the Empire.⁷⁰

The acquisition of Aden was one of the last steps in the definite establishment of the Suez route for the regular transportation of mails and passengers to and from India. It was also the logical culmination of the long series of surveys which had characterized the first third of the century in eastern waters. Coming at the moment when the Euphrates Expedition had in essential respects failed, the capture of Aden concentrated attention both at home and in India on the route through Egypt, leaving the Euphrates route to figure in the history of communications only as an alternative project. The trade of the port of Aden did not develop to the extent which had been anticipated, but the port steadily increased in strategic value and importance to communication. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Aden loomed up immediately as one of the bulwarks of the Empire, controlling the transit of the Red Sea, and exercising a far more potent influence on imperial diplomacy than could possibly have been foreseen by those who brought about its capture.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Capt. F. M. Hunter, *An Account of the British Settlement of Aden in Arabia* (London, 1877); *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 276, 277. At the opening of the twentieth century, Aden was one of the six most heavily fortified positions in the British Empire.

⁷¹ See *The Indian Year Book: A Statistical and Historical Annual of the Indian Empire* . . . (1913), (Ed. by Sir Stanley Reed), pp. 128, 129.

CHAPTER IX

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OVERLAND ROUTE

THE YEAR 1835 was characterized in English affairs by a number of forward strides. At home the readjustment following the great Reform Bill had been largely effected without any signs of the ruin which the old Tories had confidently anticipated from the letting down of the bars to the middle class. Nothing more dangerous was to be expected from the Bill for the reform of the municipalities which was readily enacted in that year. A note of optimism pervaded all the gloom which could be conjured up by the adherents of the old order. In foreign affairs the outlook was brighter than for several years previously. Resentment toward France still remained in many quarters over the ease with which Algeria had been acquired regardless of the pledges given by the old Bourbon Government to the contrary, and the French were suspected of having deep designs in Greece and in the Levant. Nevertheless, the Orléans régime was so absorbed in making the most of the new industrial movement as to cause no immediate anxiety, while English travellers by the hundreds crossed the Channel in the new steam boats and revisited favorite haunts which they had not viewed since the July Revolution. Relations with Russia were less critical than they had been a few years earlier. Still, Russia had not been forgiven for her trickery in connection with the fateful Treaty of London, and she was popularly supposed to be making preparations for securing India whenever a convenient occasion might arise.¹ The English were still being viewed with suspicion by the Porte, in consequence of the late misfortunes in Greece, and Mehemet Ali was becoming a greater source of con-

¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Minutes of Evidence, pp. 96, 97; Capt. James Barber, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir John Cam Hobhouse, Bart., M.P., Pres. of the India Board, etc., etc., on Steam Navigation with India* . . . pp. 9-12; Capt. Melville Grindlay, *A View of the Present State of the Question as to Steam Navigation with India* . . . pp. 8-10, 24, 25; *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, N.S., Pt. I, 98, 99.

cern because of the vigor with which he was undertaking to secure the compensation due him for his services during the Greek revolt. Elsewhere, however, the European world was enjoying one of those relatively quiescent moods which gave little indication of later storms to come.

The British world, under the impulse of rapidly growing industry and trade, was thus encouraged to look ahead. The cause of improved communications with the East Indies, which had been only slowly developing since the premature voyage of the *Enterprize* in 1825, now entered upon a more vigorous career. As a result of a substantial parliamentary grant, a well-equipped steam expedition was engaged in penetrating Syria to the Euphrates with the object of establishing an imperial highway and spanning nearly a score of centuries to bring the valley of Mesopotamia again within the European horizon. Surveys in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and elsewhere in the Arabian Sea were locating those channels by which India could more readily be linked with Europe. "Steam Committees" of influential Anglo-Indians were keeping up an increasing agitation in the presidencies, and even though their efforts were largely competitive and wasteful, the din arising over the issue of improved contacts could not be misunderstood in the home country.

It had long been the complaint of members of the Anglo-Indian communities that the Government at home took no interest in improved communication. But similar complaints directed against the East India Company were probably better grounded. The Company, because of the nature of its monopoly, had until lately held supreme sway in eastern waters. Its directors had generally been slow to admit that the development of shorter lines of communication by means of steam vessels offered any particular advantages. This attitude had been assumed because of the obvious expense connected with adequate steam establishments and the greater difficulty which would be experienced in maintaining an exclusive political policy in India — a policy characterized by careful censorship, the exclusion of all unlicensed persons of any nationality, and the keeping of Indian peoples in ignorance of western ideas and institutions. Even if this policy had not dictated an unreceptive attitude toward the growth of rapid steam transit at regular and frequent intervals, the almost bankrupt financial condition of the Company must invariably have done so. It is a matter of some interest, therefore, to find that after the Directors of the Company had with some difficulty been persuaded to contribute several thousand pounds sterling to the Euphrates Expedition, they were soon further prevailed upon

actively to take in hand the development of steam lines on the Suez route.

Several factors combined near the beginning of the year 1835 to work a change in the views of the Board of Directors toward rapid communication. To begin with, some of the officials of the Company, who had served with distinction in India, became zealous advocates of the new plan. That was particularly true of Lord William Bentinck, who, after the completion of his term as Governor-General in India, returned to England and remained a strong protagonist of steam communication until his death in 1839.² The efforts of the Malcolms have already been adverted to. The numerous petitions and memorials from the Indian Presidencies also contributed telling influences.³ But still more powerful factors were at work. In 1833 the commercial monopoly of the Company for the China trade had been removed, and, because of the deplorable financial status of the concern, the entire revocation of its charter was seriously considered by the British Government, then and for some time thereafter.⁴ The matter resulted in the practical assumption by the Government of financial responsibility for the Company, leaving its organization intact to function very much as an administrative branch of the Imperial Government, though still retaining a large degree of independence of governmental control. But the Government had assumed certain moral and financial obligations for the Company only with the understanding that an enlightened policy would be pursued in future. The Company not only agreed to these conditions, one of which was the development of steam lines in eastern waters, but it also arrived at the conclusion that the more evidences of a progressive policy it could show, the more certain would be the support of the Government. Besides, there was a great likelihood that if the Company did not develop the eastern lines, the British Government would presently invade the East for that purpose.⁵ This change in policy, coupled with the sincere interest of a few of the Directors in the matter of improved contacts with India for both administrative and cultural purposes, presently led the Company as actively to promote the cause of steam as it had formerly opposed it.⁶

² *Asiatic Journal*, XXIX, N.S., Pt. I, 166; *ibid.*, N.S., Pt. I, 312, 313.

³ Some of the great English business concerns were anxious for the opening of the new route in the belief that trade would follow communications. A great boom in India cotton was anticipated. — *Ibid.*, Pt. II, 179, 180.

⁴ Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 48; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., pp. 187-190.

⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 38.

⁶ Sir James Carnac, Chairman of the Court of Directors, was especially active in support of a thorough development of steam communication. — *Ibid.*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 34.

As long as the Euphrates Expedition gave promise of any accomplishments of value toward the development of what was generally termed an "alternative" route, sentiment was slow in focusing on the route by way of the Red Sea, which the Select Parliamentary Committee of 1834 had designated as the future main artery of communication. The Euphrates Expedition was, of course, a Government project, and British officialdom was more concerned with the circumventing of rivals by means of a strategic line than with the sending of private communications, despatches, and business papers. Nevertheless, some definite progress was made before 1837 toward the permanent opening of the more essential line. The first intimation of a change in the policy of the East India House was contained in a notice issued early in the year 1835 by the Post Office in London, stating that, beginning with the second of March following, letters would be accepted for India by way of Egypt, postage to be prepaid as far as Alexandria.⁷ Such mails were to be made up on the first of every succeeding month and despatched from Falmouth for Malta in the steam packets of the Admiralty. From Malta they would be forwarded to Alexandria by branch steamers at such times as the necessary vessels were available. That this plan was looked upon as being more than a temporary trial is indicated by the fact that the Admiralty Board simultaneously placed orders for the building of six new steamers expressly for the Mediterranean service.⁸ Private agencies and the good-will of the Pasha were relied upon for the time being to secure the transmission of all private mails to Cairo and across the desert to the Red Sea. From Suez the vessels of the Indian Navy were expected to maintain as regular a service as possible.⁹

Another significant gesture was contained in an announcement made in the House of Commons by Sir John Hobhouse, President of the India Board, in August, 1835, that an arrangement had been completed between His Majesty's Government and the East India Company whereby two large steam vessels were to be added to the Indian Navy and used on the Suez line to supplement the *Hugh Lindsay*.¹⁰ While this news was received with

⁷ *Ibid.*, XVI, N.S., Pt. II, 148.

⁸ *Steam to India: or, The New Indian Guide* . . . (London, 1835), pp. 242, 243. This plan was varied on several occasions by the sending of packets to Beirut or Antioch, instead of Egypt, so that the Persian Gulf route might be given a comparative trial.

⁹ The *Hugh Lindsay*, of course, could not maintain the service alone, and was supplemented by the sailing ships of the Navy for a time, and by the *Forbes* on one occasion.

¹⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 38; *ibid.*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 178-180; *London Times*, 18 Aug., 1835. This step had been bitterly opposed by the stock-

signs of joy both in England and in India, it was at the same time apparent that before the Suez line could be considered as in any sense fully opened, additional facilities would be necessary both on the Indian end of the line and for the transit through Egypt. The conclusion had been reached by all authorities on the subject of improved communications that, although a service requiring steam voyages from India to Suez four times per year had been suggested in Calcutta at various times, nothing less than a regular monthly service would be in any way adequate.¹¹ It was still considered probable that for three or four months during the height of the southwest monsoon the line by the Persian Gulf and Euphrates would be found more practicable than voyages direct to Suez, even if the new steam vessels being constructed should be able to combat the head winds and heavy seas of the Arabian Sea successfully.¹²

The arrangements made by Crown and Company in 1835 produced some degree of satisfaction in India only at Bombay. Since the new steamers were to be placed on the Suez-Bombay line, the inhabitants of the second presidency found themselves fairly well provided for and so had less occasion for fault-finding than the Anglo-Indian communities on the opposite side of India. From the beginning, the people of Bombay had placed their faith in Government rather than in private enterprise for the realization of their hopes, and by 1836 it appeared as if their judgment were about to be vindicated.¹³ So sanguine were some of the members of the Bombay Steam Committee, in fact, that at a meeting held on October 20, 1836, it was decided that, "since steam communication was a thing practically assured, and since the [steam] fund was not sufficient for any great purpose," it should be repaid *pro rata* to the original subscribers. The members of the Steam Committee afterward reconsidered their action, however, fearing

holders of the Company, who had insisted that it was not just to embark on a policy which must inevitably lead to the placing of additional burdens on the Indian peoples, who would derive little or no benefit from the establishment and who were not interested in it. India already had to pay an annual proprietors' dividend of £630,000, it was stated, and the projected steam line would add to this an annual expense of about £150,000.

¹¹ Actual test in 1837 appeared to show that more letters were despatched by each monthly mail than by bi-monthly or quarterly voyages. — *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 48.

¹² The experimental voyages of the *Hugh Lindsay*, while of considerable value, did not aid a great deal in the solving of many of these problems because of their irregularity and the fact that they had not been made under typical or uniform conditions.

¹³ *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 23, 24; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 16.

that the dissolution of their steam fund would signify a lack of further interest in the cause which had yet hardly developed beyond an embryonic stage. At a subsequent meeting, therefore, the previous action was rescinded, and it was voted to apply as much of the fund as was necessary to the development and improvement of the passage through Egypt, with particular reference to that part of the line between Suez and Cairo.¹⁴ For several years to come, Bombay funds were wisely employed in this manner, and many travellers had adequate cause to be thankful for the arrangements thus made for their comfort and convenience which contributed materially to rob the desert trip of its dread.

Meanwhile, Calcutta and Madras were growing more and more impatient. The Company's new steam program of 1835 made no particular provision for these presidencies because mails could be carried by *dâk* across country to and from Bombay as rapidly as they could be transported by sea, and passenger traffic was estimated to be insufficient to warrant additional steam lines around India.¹⁵ The English residents of these capitals, however, felt that their needs had been overlooked. Their feeling of humiliation in not being taken more into account was frequently aggravated by delays in the transmission of the mails to or from Bombay overland, and especially by the *sang froid* with which the Bombay authorities despatched packet vessels for Suez without having given due notice in the other presidencies, or without having waited for the mails known to be *en route* to Bombay from other Indian centres. Such mails were, of course, held at Bombay until the sailing of the next vessel, which might thus cause them to arrive in England later than if they had been despatched in sailing ships around the Cape. This carelessness of Government officials at Bombay grew from a grievance into an abuse, and eventually required rigid schedules for the sailings, made binding by orders from the Court of Directors and from the Supreme Government at Calcutta.¹⁶

At no time did the Calcutta community have much faith in the Company's plans for steam communication.¹⁷ From the begin-

¹⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, pp. 34, 35. A part of the Steam Fund was placed at the disposal of the Bombay Government for the sending of mail overland between Basrah and Beirut.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 277, 294; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 15. The *dâk* (or *dawk*) sometimes made the difficult journey between Calcutta and Bombay in ten days at this period, though usually at least fifteen were required.

¹⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 298; *ibid.*, XXV, N.S., Pt. II, 211 (quoted from *Bengal Hurkaru* of 19 Dec., 1837); *ibid.*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. II, 7, 12, 37; *Bombay Times*, 28 Sept., 1839.

¹⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. I, 236.

ning these merchants and officials were inclined to look to private enterprise as the only means of securing adequate steam service. The Company was too obviously content with developing the Bombay line for mails and despatches, whereas Calcutta and Madras were determined to have not merely their own direct mail service, but transportation facilities, as well, which would make possible a much greater degree of personal contact with the mother country. Steam lines to their own ports would enable families to escape to England at the opening of the hot season and return at its close. With such lines in question business could be more readily transacted, children could be placed in English schools, and the isolation of residence in India would be lessened to a marked degree. It has been noted that the first private steam enterprises, sponsored by Capt. Johnston and Mr. Waghorn, had failed to materialize, the one through the insufficiency of early steam vessels, and the other largely through paucity of capital. In 1836, however, just as the Calcutta Steam Committee was contemplating the purchase of one or more steamers for a quarterly communication with England around the Cape of Good Hope,¹⁸ a new enterprise was launched in London which absorbed attention for the time being and gave momentary promise of success.

The new scheme was outlined by Major Charles Franklin Head, who had been more or less identified with the Suez route since, under commission from Governor Malcolm of Bombay, he had examined and reported on it in 1830. In 1836 he and some associates, organized as a London Steam Committee, came forward with a well-matured plan for a steamship company to operate vessels on both sides of the Isthmus of Suez to all of the presidencies.¹⁹ The prospectus of the new concern, called the "East India Steam Navigation Company," was published on October 11, 1836, and gave the details of the project. It proposed a capital stock of £500,000, made up into 10,000 shares of £50 each. These funds were to be used in building, at the outset, nine steamships for operating the entire distance between England and India on a monthly basis, three of them, of 600 tons each, to sail between England and Malta, two, of 480 tons each, to operate between Malta and Alexandria, and the four others, of 600 tons, to sail on the line between Suez and Bombay. The service was to be expanded to all of the presidencies at the earliest possible moment, and later to be extended to Australia and China, as

¹⁸ The Calcutta plan is described in Grindlay, *A View of the Present State of the Question as to Steam Navigation with India*, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., pp. 87, 102, *passim*.

well. Dividends of 5% were to be paid from the beginning. The Company's income was to be derived principally from subsidies from the British Government, expected to amount to £74,500 per year, and from the East India Company, of perhaps £65,000 annually, for carriage of mails, loan of vessels in time of war, and other services.²⁰

This scheme contained many of the elements of a plan which was successfully put into operation by another organization in 1840, and it is interesting because of its ancestral character and formative influence. As soon as it was put forward it provoked wide interest and no small amount of controversy. One writer argued that the plan was much to be preferred to that considered by the Calcutta Steam Committee, as the latter proposed only quarterly voyages, whereas the new Company proposed to operate monthly.²¹ This seemed to be such a plan as had been advocated a few years before by Mr. T. L. Peacock, of the East India House, when he said before a Parliamentary Committee regarding the establishment of steam connections with India, that "between doing it efficiently and not doing it at all, there seems to be no advisable medium."²² There were many enthusiasts in the eastern presidencies who thought that only a private commercial concern would be able properly to meet the expanding needs of the three presidencies.²³ And the report was freely circulated that both the Home Government and the East India Company looked upon the plan with approval, although this report subsequently proved to be without foundation.²⁴

On receipt of the first reports of the enterprise from London, all parts of India responded favorably. The Bombay community expressed approval of the enterprise and promised coöperation, but they actually took no steps to advance it, no doubt fearing that its success might prevent or postpone the anticipated full development of the Bombay line by Government agencies.²⁵ An interested group of Madras inhabitants, called together by the Steam Committee in October, 1836, voted "to support, by taking

²⁰ Grindlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-78; *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 70. The amounts requested as subsidy were subsequently reduced to £40,000 and £25,000 respectively, leaving £58,000 to be made up from private sources, passenger fares, transportation of valuable goods, and the like.

²¹ Grindlay, *op. cit.*, 147-157.

²² *Ibid.*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 106.

²³ *Ibid.*, XXI, N.S., Pt. I, 316; Barber, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 37. There were those, however, who thought the East India Company the logical agency for the task. — *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 153, 154.

²⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. I, 70; *ibid.*, XXII, N.S., Pt. II, 256; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., pp. 15-16; Dionysius Lardner, *Steam Communication with India by the Red Sea* . . . (London, 1837).

²⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 216, 217.

shares in any Joint Stock Company possessing a charter, which shall be formed in England under the auspices of the committee of which Maj. Head is chairman, for the accomplishing of a steam communication which shall secure to Madras the advantage of a direct communication from the Red Sea. . . .”²⁶ A subscription list of those who would be willing to purchase shares in the concern was also begun. However, when later information, including the Company’s prospectus, revealed the fact that only Bombay was to be the terminus of the line at the outset, enthusiasm gave place to aloofness. In January, 1837, a meeting of the Madras Steam Committee adopted a resolution which stated that “The inhabitants of Madras . . . are not yet prepared to enter into any negotiation with the Provisional Committee of London in regard to shares in the proposed Indian Steam-Company. . . . The number of shares taken here will be much increased, if the port of Madras is included in the benefits of the steam-communication, as well in regard to passengers as letters.”²⁷

The spokesmen of the Calcutta community were especially cool in their attitude toward the new steam company, although their paid agent in London, Capt. Melville Grindlay, was one of its ardent supporters. In replying to the overtures of the officers of the new concern, the Bengal Steam Committee said:

The Calcutta Committee consider that no plan can be efficient which does not embrace the whole communication from England to Calcutta, thereby including every part of India, dropping mails and passengers in its progress, whether at Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria, Bombay (from Socotra), Galle, Madras, and so on to Calcutta, proceeding the whole way *with the utmost* despatch. If this despatch is impracticable, as the London Committees have suggested, a communication to Calcutta round the Cape would be preferable.²⁸

The Committee ridiculed the idea of making the project pay as long as it was confined to Bombay. Indeed, they were so chagrined at the support given it by their agent, Grindlay, that at a later meeting a resolution was unanimously adopted, stating:

That as Capt. Grindlay has not advocated the plan of extending steam communication to all the ports of India, as prayed for in the petition and memorials of the inhabitants

²⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, XXV, N.S., Pt. II, 191.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 65, 111.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 106-108.

of Bengal, entrusted to him for . . . that object, the Committee cannot but feel dissatisfied with his agency, and request, therefore, that he will bring his accounts . . . to a close, as soon as practicable.²⁹

This action by the stormy petrels of the Calcutta Presidency caused a distinct break with the London Steam Committee, which stoutly upheld the loyalty and conscientiousness of Capt. Grindlay. The breach was not closed by the appointment of Capt. Barber, one of the members of the provisional steam company, as Grindlay's successor.³⁰ From this time forward, the East India Steam Navigation Company entered no longer into the calculations of officials and merchants of the principal Indian metropolis.

By the first of the year 1837, it was apparent to all well informed persons that the Euphrates Expedition had altogether failed in its object of opening up a line by which mails and passengers could be regularly and safely transported. The first of that year also saw two new steamers put into commission on the line from Bombay to the Red Sea by the East India Company. These vessels, the *Atalanta*, of 617 tons and 210 horsepower, and the *Berenice*, 765 tons and 220 horsepower, built in accordance with the joint arrangement of 1835, were sent out to India by way of the Cape in December, 1836, and March, 1837, and were immediately put into commission.³¹ As this arrangement appeared to be entirely feasible, negotiations were soon recommenced by the Court of Directors and the Board of Control for extending the service thus begun so that no interruptions need occur in the monthly service to Suez.

In taking up the matter of the extension of existing arrangements on the Indian side of the Isthmus of Suez, the Board of Control, supported by other departments of Government, wished

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 4, 65, 135; *ibid.*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 110. The Madras *Conservative* (23 May, 1837) protested bitterly against this action and asked for a plausible reason, insisting that "a just one they cannot give." The petition referred to was one drawn up at a meeting on March 5, 1836, and which was sent to England bearing 3,542 signatures, "including almost every man of influence at Calcutta."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, XXV, N.S., Pt. II, 77, 78; *ibid.*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 305, 306; *ibid.*, XXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 188, 207, 208, 277.

³¹ Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, II, 50-52; *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., pp. 21, *passim*; App. No. I, p. 207; *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, N.S., Pt. II, 201, 202. According to the temporary plan, the *Atalanta* and the *Berenice* were to sail in alternate months from Bombay to Mocha and Suez. In their outward voyages to Bombay, during which both steam and sails were used, the *Atalanta* consumed 106 days and the *Berenice* 108 days. Compared with these records, that of the *Enterprise* of 113 days to Calcutta in 1825 shows up very favorably.

to adopt what had already been termed in Calcutta the "comprehensive plan" of service to all three of the presidencies. The Court of Directors demurred at this, and, stating their belief that India would be sufficiently provided for by a complete development of the Bombay line, proposed that this feature be left tentative, so that as the steam equipment was augmented and more experience was gained the service might be extended to Madras and Calcutta. This proposal was accepted by Sir John Hobhouse for the Board of Control, in order to secure immediate action, though he considered it but "half a loaf."³² Estimates were then prepared of the number of new steamers and the expense required, which showed a cost of £88,000 per annum for the operation of four steamers from Bombay, exclusive of their original cost, the total of which was placed at £120,000. It was agreed that this expense was to be shared between Government and Company, the former receiving all income from postage, and the Company having the privilege of withdrawing the vessels from packet service in the event of dangerous hostilities in the East.³³ The arrangement having been agreed to by all parties concerned, the Court of Directors sent to the Governor-General of India on June 2 a despatch stating that provisions for a regular monthly communication between Bombay and England by way of the Red Sea had been concluded and directing him to establish the necessary coal depots at Bombay, Mocha, and Suez.³⁴

This was the situation when, with the return to England of members of the Euphrates Expedition, the whole question of steam communication with India was raised in the House of Commons on the night of June 10. Lord William Bentinck, in presenting another petition from the Calcutta Steam Committee, took occasion to move the appointment of a Select Committee "to enquire into the practicability of effecting a steam-communication with India." Sir John Hobhouse thereupon announced for the first time, that an arrangement had lately been completed by the

³² *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 22; *Asiatic Journal*, XXII, N.S., Pt. II, 289, 290, "Debate at the East India House." Nevertheless, there were good reasons for suspecting that steam lines from Suez to Madras and Calcutta, rounding Ceylon at Point de Galle, would be more expensive to operate and would be less profitable than a line to Bombay direct. All parts of India could be served in some fashion from Bombay, while it appeared doubtful whether the increased volume of patronage from the Indian East Coast would warrant the extension of service to those ports. A steam equipment sufficient for frequent and regular service from Suez to all of the Indian Presidencies would have to be twice as extensive as that required for sailings alone. See Capt. James Barber, *Statement of Facts relating to Steam-Communication with India, on the Comprehensive Plan* (London, 1839).

³³ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 163, 259, 325.

³⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 21. Aden, of course, had not yet come to be considered the principal way station.

Government with the Court of Directors for the carrying out of just such an object, and he continued that "it must be clearly understood that he consented to the appointment of this committee on condition that it should not in any way interfere with that arrangement." Under these conditions the motion was carried.³⁵

Thus, with its power already circumscribed and its functions largely predetermined, the Select Committee of the House of Commons was formed, with instructions "to inquire into the best means of establishing a communication by steam with India by way of the Red Sea." Not much time remained before the close of the parliamentary session, but in the time available, the Committee examined all the bearings of the subject as thoroughly as possible. Evidence was received from representatives of the India House, the Board of Control, the Indian steam associations, the proposed East India Steam Navigation Company, and others.³⁶ In order to review and verify the official arrangements already embarked upon, the Committee undertook a comparison of the probable efficiency of private and public agencies in the transportation of mails and passengers, and the relative adequacy of the Bombay and "comprehensive" plans. The final report of the Committee, handed in on July 15, sanctioned the Government scheme in general. However, Lord Bentinck, Chairman of the Committee, and some others of the group, believed the existing plans somewhat shortsighted, and they insisted upon writing into the report the statement that —

Inasmuch as . . . a direct communication by steam from the Red Sea to Ceylon, Madras, and Bengal, would be practicable at all seasons of the year by the employment of vessels of adequate tonnage and power; and as, under judicious arrangements, such extended establishments would appear to offer a prospect of an adequate return for the increased outlay, by the conveyance of Passengers, and of some valuable articles of Merchandize, which cannot be expected from the limited communication with Bombay alone; Your committee feel bound to recommend a continued attention to the subject on the part of Her Majesty's Government and the East India Company. . . .³⁷

The report of the Committee had no appreciable effect on the joint plans of the Government and East India Company, but it

³⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 261, 325.

³⁶ See the list of witnesses in *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, p. [iv].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. [iii]; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. I, 249-264.

did, by showing the impossibility of securing Government support and guarantees for any similar private venture, bring about the complete disruption of the provisional East India Steam concern. Private initiative in eastern steam navigation was again looked upon with favor only after considerable experience had been gained both by the East India Company and the interested public in the anomaly of operating as mail and passenger steamers boats which were constructed with a view to their capacity as war vessels and which were truculently commanded by officers of the Indian Navy.

In the meantime, the details of the official scheme of communication were being worked out rapidly, in marked contrast with the dilatory way in which the matter had been approached in preceding years. One of the matters of concern related to the postage which should be levied on mails to and from India. According to existing law, the rates by the overland route must be the same as those charged for transportation in sailing packets around the Cape. Since the new steam transit would be very much more costly than the old, as well as much speedier, the Post Office Department was finally convinced that a higher rate of postage would be warranted to help offset the additional expense. Soon after the report of the Select Committee, an Act was passed placing the postage on letters of 1 ounce weight at 4 shillings, and 4 shillings more for each additional one-quarter ounce. Other rates were in proportion, and it was optional whether they were paid in advance. The usual postage charges were retained on Government packets in the Mediterranean.³⁸ The India rates were high, to be sure, but business houses had expressed their entire willingness to bear such expense, since correspondence could be sent by the overland passage in about half the usual time.

The question of establishing coal depots also received careful attention. Heretofore all the coal used in Indian steamers had been sent out in sailing ships around the Cape, and because of the high quality required, the time and costs involved in shipment and transshipment, and the rapid depreciation of the quality of fuel in the tropics, it was one of the largest items in the maintenance of rapid steam service to Red Sea ports. Coal placed at the stations along the route, at such points as Socotra, Aden,

³⁸ 6 & 7 William IV, ch. 76; *The Bengal and Agra Annual Guide and Gazetteer* for 1841, 3d ed., I, 85, 86; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 259, 326. The rates specified for the overland route were also to apply to that by way of Syria and the Persian Gulf.

Mocha, Jeddah, Cosseir, and Suez, had to be sent out to Bombay in sailing vessels, and reloaded and reshipped to Arabia and the Red Sea. Coal deposited at Suez for the use of the *Hugh Lindsay* on the first series of voyages had cost from £8 to £13 per ton; and as several hundred tons were required for each voyage the fuel item alone sometimes had reached the relatively staggering sum of £2500 per trip.³⁹ Thomas Waghorn helped to solve this problem as far as the coal depots in Egypt were concerned. Following his establishment in Egypt in 1835 as an East India agent, he set about organizing a means of conveying coal from Alexandria to Red Sea ports overland. At one time, Waghorn had a large caravan of camels in constant service between Cairo, whence the coal was transported in barges from Alexandria, and Suez, the labor being so cheap at that time that the price of coal at Suez was lowered from about £10 to £3 per ton.⁴⁰ This was no small factor in the rapidity with which steamships multiplied in eastern waters after 1835, and it was undoubtedly one of Waghorn's greatest accomplishments. Efforts were continued over a period of several years to locate a suitable supply of coal in India, in Egypt, and even in Syria. Now and then the search appeared to meet with success; but comparative tests always proved the greater worth of English or Welsh coal.⁴¹

From the time of the establishment of frequent French packet service between Marseilles and Alexandria, many travellers going in both directions had availed themselves of the French line, preferring the speedy land trip between Marseilles and the Channel to the long, rough voyage by the Admiralty packets through the Straits of Gibraltar and across the Bay of Biscay to Falmouth. Now that speed was becoming an essential in the despatch of mails, the plan was suggested of sending the English mails direct from London through France to Marseilles, thence either by Admiralty packet or French steamer to Malta, and from Malta to Alexandria by British Government vessel. This was a matter of some delicacy, since the British Government could hardly contemplate having official mails and despatches passed through the French Post Office. On the other hand, the French authorities hesitated to permit the mails to pass through France in sealed packets, accompanied by an official messenger or *courier*

³⁹ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 138; James Douglas, *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India*, p. 142. Douglas says that at one time coal cost £23 per ton at Suez and required fifteen months to get there.

⁴⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 175.

⁴¹ *Bombay Times*, 15 June, 1839; *Asiatic Journal*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 122, 189; *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, p. 37.

de cabinet, for whose safety and expedition the French Government would naturally be held to a degree responsible.

Late in May, 1837, Lord Palmerston took up with the French Government the matter of the transit of the mails through France, and effected a temporary and tentative arrangement whereby official despatches in sealed packages were to be permitted to pass without inspection by the French Post Office if accompanied by an official messenger.⁴² This did not apply to the general Indian mails, however. The solution to this rather baffling problem was suggested to the Government by a Mr. Calvert, who had formerly been a resident at Malta. He proposed that in return for the privilege of sending all Indian mails through France *en cachet*, and their transportation through the Mediterranean in French steamers, the French were to be accorded a like privilege of sending their eastern mails to or from Alexandria in the Admiralty packets, with the right of passing or exchanging them at Malta unopened. This arrangement would save some ten days in time between London and Malta for the British mails, with the additional advantage of speedier and more frequent steam service in the Mediterranean, the French steamers being faster than those of the British Government.⁴³ French mails, on the other hand, might pursue a more direct route between Marseilles and Alexandria, with the option of being shipped to or from Suez in the vessels of the East India Company.⁴⁴

Some time was required to carry these proposals into effect. During the course of the negotiations with the various authorities of the French Government, English mails were sent as usual by Government packet from Falmouth. After the first of September, 1837, the sailings from this point for Iberian ports were weekly, stops being made at Vigo, Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz, and Gibraltar. From the latter station, other vessels continued the service fortnightly to Malta, Greece, the Ionian Islands, and Egypt. Mails and passengers destined for India and the East were transferred at Malta to a third line running direct to Alexandria.⁴⁵ The many stops and transfers along the route retarded progress to a great extent, and had much influence on a new series of attempts to establish a single direct through service from London to India which came into prominence three years later.

⁴² *Bombay Times*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 21.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Min. of Ev., pp. 114-116; *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 162; *ibid.*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 175. French packets were plying between France and Egypt regularly every ten days in 1837.

⁴⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 21.

⁴⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 53.

Passengers meanwhile might choose their route in travelling to Alexandria. Those to whom time was no great object might sail in the Admiralty packets from Falmouth, transferring with the mails at Gibraltar and Malta. Those desiring greater despatch or less *mal de mer* could proceed from London across the Channel to Paris, from Paris to Marseilles in express carriages, and from Marseilles in a French packet to Alexandria by way of Nice, Livoria, Naples, Malta, and Navarino twice a month. A third alternative lay in reaching Trieste, at the head of the Adriatic Sea, by any one of a number of routes, and proceeding thence to Alexandria in vessels of the Austrian Lloyd which ran by way of Constantinople.⁴⁶ At Suez (or Cosseir, if they chose to go by way of Upper Egypt) opportunities for reaching India would, of course, be identical with those for the mails.⁴⁷ There was some choice as late as 1837 between steam or sailing vessels of the Indian Navy, although there was seldom an opportunity to exercise the choice owing to the fact that, until 1839, all sailing schedules east of Suez were prepared by officials of the Bombay Government and seldom announced long in advance. Of the two types of vessels, the steamers made much more rapid voyages, as a rule. Voyages between England and India were frequently made by steam within the space of sixty days, and at the height of the southwest monsoon, within eighty-five days. In 1836 one English mail reached Bombay in the space of forty-five days,⁴⁸ and records established during one season were apt to be broken during the next for some years to come.

Steam voyages in the Mediterranean by any of the several lines were uniformly accounted a pleasure.⁴⁹ Such was not the case, however, on the steam vessels of the Indian Navy. For comfort, the sailing vessels employing the Cape route, or even the sailing cruisers of the Indian Navy, were to be preferred to the best of the Company's steamers. A well-known traveller, who was also an impartial observer, gave the following account of conditions on the *Berenice*, one of the crack vessels of the Indian Navy:

⁴⁶ Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine and Adjacent Regions* . . . (3 vols., London, 1856), I, 3 ff. The Austrian steamers ran twice a month at this time, and were frequently patronized by English travellers.

⁴⁷ *London Times*, 2 Oct., 1835; *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 192; *Morning Herald*, 29 Dec., 1835.

⁴⁸ Grindlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-91; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 217. The latter account gives the time as 44 days. Other mails by the same route during the year required from 53 to 85 days.

⁴⁹ *Asiatic Journal*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 299-301; Capt. T. Seymour Burt, *Narrative of a Late Steam Voyage from England to India* (London, 1840); *Memoranda for Travellers proceeding via Egypt from India to England* (London, 1838).

. . . The cabins were small and miserable. Cockroaches abounded. Washing had to be done in a public room. Each passenger was expected to fit up his own stateroom on the government steamers. Sleeping accommodations consisted of a mattress placed on some trunks or boxes, while many slept on tables and benches. The rooms were hot and smelly, and the servants lazy and indolent. Food was served in the common saloon, which also served the purpose of toilet room and lounge for both sexes. . . Piles of coal soot invaded everything. . .⁵⁰

Yet for practical purposes, the trial of monthly steam communication, informally undertaken in 1836 and extended in 1837, worked fully as well as its protagonists had expected, even though the service was by no means perfect. There were instances of heartburn in the presidencies when mails from Calcutta and Madras occasionally missed being despatched from Bombay on the proper steamer.⁵¹ In 1838 some of the mail packets being despatched both to and from India by the Mesopotamian route during the monsoon season were seized and rifled by the Arabs and their contents lost.⁵² Occasionally steamers putting out from Bombay during the prevalence of the southwest monsoon were unable to reach their destination and had to put back into port.⁵³ During the same year, the whole service was seriously disrupted for a time owing to the necessity of diverting some of the Company's steamers from their usual duties on the Suez line to war service in the demonstration against Persia.⁵⁴ By this time, however, dependence on regular Indian mails was such that, instead of provoking a storm of criticism against the whole business of steam transit by the overland route, as would have been the case but a very few years earlier, the wave of indignation was directed

⁵⁰ "Notes of a Journey through France and Egypt to Bombay," in *Asiatic Journal*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. I, 104-106. This is part of a detailed account given by Emma Roberts, who made this particular trip (in 1839) chiefly for the experience. Soon after reaching India, however, she succumbed to the effects of the climate and died at Poona, in September, 1839, but a short time after her "Notes" had been sent in. Miss Roberts ascribed much of the discomfort on board the Company's vessels to the fact that the officers hated the steam service.

⁵¹ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. II, 13, 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 159, 294, 295. There appeared to be some reason to suspect that these Arabs had been sent out by the orders of Mehemet Ali for the express purpose of intercepting and plundering the mails. This was probably another of his many attempts to discredit the route through Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf.

⁵³ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 55, 56; Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 137; *Asiatic Journal*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 121, 122.

⁵⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1843, No. 399, p. 2; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. I, 89.

at the Company's political policy and at a system which permitted a complete suspension of service whenever hostilities threatened. Business houses had come to place a great deal of reliance on speedy and dependable communication, and any defects which developed in the scheme after 1837 elicited a chorus of protests, not so much from the calamity-mongers, as from business houses engaged in the eastern trade.

The number of Company's steam vessels in Indian waters was meanwhile growing. To the *Atalanta* and *Berenice*, sent out from England in 1836 and early in 1837, was added the *Semiramis* in April, 1838. This vessel, of 720 tons and 300 horsepower, commanded by Capt. George Barnes Brucks, who had won his spurs in the surveys of the Indian Navy, was built with the purpose of conquering "that bug-bear of Bombay imagination, the southwest monsoon."⁵⁵ The *Semiramis* proved to be unequal to the monsoon at its height, however. After having returned from armed service in the Persian Gulf, the vessel was despatched from Bombay on July 15, 1838, and for eight days plunged into the high seas, covering but six hundred miles. With coal practically gone and paddle wheels battered by the heavy seas, the vessel had to return to Bombay.⁵⁶ But this was an exception that proved the rule; ordinarily these steamers were able to reach the mouth of the Red Sea in the most adverse weather.⁵⁷

The *Semiramis* was the first vessel to be added to the Company's fleet in accordance with the joint plan adopted in May and June of 1837. Some of the later vessels to be added were built in the dockyard at Bombay, and fitted with engines brought out from England. These were to make possible a complete steam service on the Suez line and thus leave the sailing vessels for survey and patrol work. Several new or remodeled steamers were added to the eastern fleet in 1839 and 1840. Early in 1839 the Court of Directors found occasion to purchase for the packet service an English coast-wise steamer, named the *Kilkenny*. She had already been for some time in service, carrying swine from Waterford to Bristol. After a perfunctory overhauling, this vessel, of 684 tons and 280 horsepower, was despatched to Bombay and was added to the service under the classic name of *Zenobia*, and within a few months became the most unpopular packet in the fleet. The *Victoria*, 705 tons and 230 horsepower,

⁵⁵ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 52, 53.

⁵⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 277, 294.

⁵⁷ The voyages to Suez during the monsoon were frequently made under great difficulty, however. See *Asiatic Journal*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 121, 122.

was launched at Bombay late in 1839, and was presently put into service under Commander Henry Ormsby, who had taken part in one of the earliest surveys of Mesopotamia. The *Victoria* was the fastest vessel of the Navy, and, because of her equipment, the best passenger steamer. Another Bombay vessel, the *Auckland*, of 946 tons and 220 horsepower, was launched in January, 1840. In April, the steam-sloop *Cleopatra* arrived from England, in charge of Commander Robert Moresby. In June another English-built ship, the steam frigate *Sesostris*, 876 tons and 220 horsepower, also in charge of Commander Moresby, made her appearance at Bombay. An iron steamer, the *Nemesis*, 700 tons and 120 horsepower, built at Liverpool, was sent out in March, 1840, and upon her arrival in India was employed in the Chinese War as were some of the others.⁵⁸ Still other fine vessels were added from time to time.⁵⁹

In 1838 the Court of Directors determined to place their whole Navy on a steam basis as soon as new vessels could be acquired. Of the new steamers built, some were constructed with a view to constant service on the Bombay-Suez line, but all of them were adapted for duty as armed naval vessels whenever need arose. This naturally handicapped their utility as packet steamers, and there were few regrets when the relatively luxurious vessels of a new steam concern, constructed altogether for peace-time work in conveying mails and passengers, made their appearance within a few years east of Suez. Yet to the vessels of the Company's Indian Navy, sailing ships and steam ships alike, belongs the credit of opening up and partially developing the shorter passages to Europe, and without this pioneering work it is difficult to see how a private enterprise could readily have been successful.

A large part of the effectiveness of the overland route depended on the passage through Egypt. How this portion of the route, which gave the name "overland" to the whole, could best be opened was the source of much perplexity from the first. Neither the British Government nor the East India Company cared to risk becoming involved in political complications with the Pasha on the one hand or the Turkish Government on the other under any sort of guarantee whatever. Hence this very important link in what was otherwise becoming an official route

⁵⁸ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 135, 136; *Asiatic Journal*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. I, 206; III, 3d Ser., 355-358; *Parl. Pap.*, 1843, No. 301, p. 1. The original *Semiramis* was converted into a coal vessel in 1842, and stationed at Aden. Her engines, however, were installed in a new teak ship built at Bombay and also christened the *Semiramis*.

⁵⁹ See *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 295.

had to be left open to private enterprise. Such mails and despatches as had been sent through Egypt prior to 1835 had been carried, with a few exceptions, by private messengers employed either by large business houses in London or by the Bombay Government under the protection of the English Consul in Egypt. But after the Company's announcement of the new steamers to be placed on the Red Sea line, there was evidently room for more private enterprise.

One of the first to sense a great opportunity in the situation was Thomas Waghorn. All of Waghorn's early projects for commercial lines of steamships to ply between Great Britain and India first by the Cape route and later by way of the Red Sea had come to nothing. Still, he had not been idle, having served on a number of occasions as a messenger between the two countries, and he had lost none of his enthusiasm for the Suez route.⁶⁰ Within a few weeks from the time of the announcement of new steamers to be built for the Suez line, Waghorn authorized the public announcement that he was about to proceed to Egypt and establish himself there as an agent for the transporting of mails, goods and passengers between Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez, so that a definite schedule might be maintained between England and India at all times. According to his plan, mails confided to his care would be carried through Egypt by special messenger and either embarked at Suez in vessels of the Indian Navy or sent in "country" boats to Mocha, Aden, or Socotra, and thence as opportunity afforded to India.

But in a field having such bright prospects, Waghorn was not left long without competitors. Two Englishmen, Messrs. Hill and Raven, had already established themselves at Cairo and had built there a hotel primarily for transient travellers by the overland passage. Presently they extended their service and arranged for the transportation of these travellers and their belongings across the desert between Cairo and Suez. In addition, almost simultaneously with Waghorn, they began the construction of a hotel at Suez, where previously there had been no accommodation of any kind, except such as travellers might provide for themselves. It was a matter of some importance to remain in Suez as brief a time as possible, because of the heat, dust, and general dreariness of the place. According to a contemporary traveller —

⁶⁰ A lengthy petition from Mr. Waghorn, in which he condemned Chesney's Euphrates venture and called attention to the greater advantages of the Suez route, was read in the House of Commons on 3 July. — *Ibid.*, XVII, N.S., Pt. II, 276. See C. Rochfort Scott, *Rambles in Egypt and Candia* . . . (2 vols., London, 1837) II, 80 ff.

The present arrangements for making it the point of communication between Europe and India by means of steam-navigation on the Red Sea, may probably give to it an impulse and somewhat enlarge its population; but it can never become anything more than a mere place of passage, which both the traveler and the inhabitant will hasten to leave as soon as possible. . . Not a garden, not a tree, not a trace of verdure, not a drop of fresh water; all the water with which Suez is supplied for personal use being brought from the fountain Naba, three hours distant across the Gulf, and so brackish as to be scarcely drinkable.⁶¹

The comfort of travellers across the eighty-odd miles of desert lying between Cairo and Suez was materially increased after 1836 by the efforts of the Bombay Steam Committee. This group, upon finding that their object of fully establishing the Suez line was about to be carried out by the Government, were for a time at a loss as to what disposition to make of their steam fund with its 1,10,907 rupees. In December, 1836, at the behest of the British Consul at Cairo, Mr. Alfred S. Walne, they voted to apply the fund toward the improvement of the overland passage through Egypt.⁶² Shortly afterward, the Committee, with the approval of the Bombay Government, despatched a Col. Barr to Egypt to arrange for the building of a series of way stations in the Egyptian desert where through passengers might pause for rest and refreshment. Col. Barr found an influential patron in the English Consul-General, Col. Patrick Campbell. Upon the completion of plans for the highway through the desert, the Consul-General addressed a long official letter to the Pasha requesting permission to erect the desired structures.⁶³

Pending the receipt of the expected answer to this communication, arrangements were entered into with Messrs. Hill and Raven, whereby they were to furnish carriages, baggage wagons, and other equipment for the desert journey, and have them always in readiness at either end of the line. The Steam Committee undertook the initial expense of this arrangement, commis-

⁶¹ Robinson, *op. cit.*, I, 47. Anon., *A Handbook for India and Egypt, Comprising the Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to England . . . and Hints for the Guidance of Passengers by that and other Overland Routes . . .* (London, 1841), said (p. 285): "The wretchedness of Suez has often been described, but never in terms too severe; the hotels belonging to the rival agents, Mr. Waghorn and Messrs. Hill and Raven, are both uncomfortable."

⁶² F.O. 97/408, Report by Walne to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847; *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 34, 35.

⁶³ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 15; W. H. Yates, *The Modern History and Condition of Egypt . . .* (2 vols., London, 1843), I, 500-505.

sioning Messrs. Hill and Raven to act as agents for a period of five years at a contract price of £1000.⁶⁴ For an additional sum the agents also contracted to erect the desert stations. These were to consist of five buildings, four of them small, and one, in the center of the desert, of the character of a hotel, with subsidiary servants' quarters, stables, and the like. An expansion of this service was contemplated later in case of its success.⁶⁵ It was originally projected that these accommodations, exclusive of food and drink, and including lodging at Messrs. Hill and Raven's Suez hotel, should be free to overland passengers. The large expense involved in the plan, however, necessitated the charging of nominal rates to all travellers who accepted the conduct of Messrs. Hill and Raven, the whole service being, of course, optional. It was estimated that when this plan was fully in operation, as it was intended to be by 1838, the desert trip could be made in about 24 hours, with only about 20 hours of actual travelling.⁶⁶

Under these conditions a miniature transportation war developed between Waghorn and Messrs. Hill and Raven. Whereas the latter were the official agents for the Bombay Steam Committee, Waghorn was the accredited agent of the British Post Office.⁶⁷ Moreover, his service extended all the way through Egypt, whereas Messrs. Hill and Raven operated the desert line only. A traveller might surrender himself at either Suez or Alexandria to a representative of Waghorn's concern, and, theoretically at least, relinquish all feeling of responsibility for baggage or means of conveyance until he had again safely boarded an out-going steamer. For this service, however, Waghorn exacted fees totalling about £13, as against £6 collected by the rival line for the desert trip only. But travellers by either agency were invariably inconvenienced by the operations of the other. Waghorn's clients were not permitted to use the desert way stations, or even to procure water at these stopping places, but Waghorn was frequently able to retaliate by hiring all of the draft and carriage animals to be had in Cairo or Suez and thus to embarrass his rivals by temporarily monopolizing the means of transportation.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ F.O. 97/408, C. A. Murray to Lord Palmerston. Barr was severely criticized by Walne for placing control of the desert station houses in the hands of a competitive concern when they should have been opened to the travelling public.

⁶⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 16.

⁶⁶ *Handbook for India and Egypt* . . . p. 261.

⁶⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, XXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 162.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 18, 19; *ibid.*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. II, 349, 350; *ibid.*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. I, 22-30. The whole expense of a trip from London to Cal-

The open rivalry of Waghorn and Hill continued until 1841, when the latter, who possessed more financial backing, won out. Waghorn was obliged to give up his independent passenger agency and coalesce with Hill, whose concern was thereafter known as J. R. Hill and Co.⁶⁹ The enlarged concern proceeded to improve their service by bringing out from England a small iron steamboat, the *Jack o' Lantern*, which plied on the Nile between Boulac, the port of Cairo, and Atfeh, at the junction of the Nile and the Mahmoudie Canal. A small independent company which had maintained horse-drawn track boats on the Canal between Atfeh and Alexandria for some time was purchased by Hill and Co. in 1842, giving them complete control of the entire line from Alexandria to Suez for the time being.⁷⁰ This period of monopoly, however, was short lived. The Company, which had never prospered in spite of heavy charges, managed to survive the undermining activities of the new and powerful Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company for some two years, but they presently succumbed to a new monopoly created by the Pasha. The new concern, known as the Egyptian Transit Company, bought out Hill and Co. in 1843, and from that time until the opening of the Suez Canal the transit through Egypt in most respects was under the direct control of the Egyptian Government.⁷¹

The convenience of travellers was greatly augmented and the whole matter of maintaining regular steamship schedules was materially aided, by the completion in 1839 of a semaphoric telegraph line from Suez to Cairo. Thereafter passengers for India sojourned in Cairo until their vessel was reported about ready to depart from Suez before they set out across the desert.⁷² The facilities for making the passage through Egypt still remained primitive and unsatisfactory for some years. Nearly every traveller spoke with disapprobation of the arrangements provided. It was only after the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company had succeeded in establishing their own steam lines on both sides of the Isthmus of Suez that the transit through Egypt was very greatly improved.

Mehemet Ali had from the first taken a deep interest in the

cutta by way of Marseilles at this time was about £170, not an insignificant sum even to the wealthy official class and the "globe trotters" who patronized the line.

⁶⁹ *Handbook for India and Egypt* . . . p. 370.

⁷⁰ F.O. 97/408, C. A. Murray to Lord Palmerston.

⁷¹ Report by A. S. Walne as transmitted by C. A. Murray, F.O. 97/408.

⁷² *Gallery of Illustration: The Route of the Overland Mail to India from Southampton to Calcutta* (London, 1850), p. 25; *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., II, 53-54.

various plans for closer contacts between England and India. Their realization, he foresaw, must inevitably bring his own country into new prominence and might be expected to afford new commercial opportunities and cultural influences. For these reasons he lent every encouragement to the development of the overland route through Egypt, which he would presumably always be able to control, while he left nothing undone to make the alternative Euphrates route appear impracticable.⁷³ When steam vessels began to multiply on both sides of his country, he took counsel as to how he might best exploit the latent opportunities of steam transit. He was at first content to give right of free passage through Egypt to both mails and passengers. But by 1834 he had evolved a plan, which, if promptly carried into effect, would have dispensed immediately with the need for both Mr. Waghorn and Mr. Hill; he had concluded to build a railway across Egypt from Alexandria to Suez by way of Cairo. This, he believed, would at once facilitate the transit through Egypt, greatly increase travel and transportation of goods and wares, and also yield a substantial revenue.⁷⁴

The railway line was laid out by Galloway Bey, one of the several sons of Alexander Galloway, an Englishman, who had spent many years in Egypt engaged in engineering enterprises. Following the railway survey in 1834, Galloway Bey was commissioned by the Pasha to go to England and secure from the English Government a formal approval of his (the Pasha's) proposition of placing a tariff of 6*d.* per mile for English goods on the first portion of the completed line, which would be about 80 miles in length. Feeling confident that his proposal would be accepted, and that the Egyptian line would soon entirely replace that by the Cape not only for travel and communication, but for goods as well, he proceeded to place large orders with English firms for iron rails, ties, and other railway equipment, shipments of which were commenced in 1835.⁷⁵

The prompt completion of a railway through Egypt, even under the auspices of the Pasha, must surely have given a great impetus to the completion of measures for regular monthly steam transit on the Suez line. The time required for crossing the country, which ordinarily averaged from eight to ten days,

⁷³ See above, pp. 165-166, *passim*.

⁷⁴ That he overlooked no opportunities to collect duties on foreign goods is indicated by the "Firman of the Sultan of Turkey to the Pasha of Egypt, relative to the execution in Egypt of the Treaties of Commerce between the Ottoman Porte and Great Britain," of 24 Dec., 1835. — *British and Foreign State Papers*, XXIII, 1291, 1292.

⁷⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., pp. 63, 64; App. No. 2, p. 202.

could thus be reduced to twenty-four or thirty hours.⁷⁶ By providing express service, travellers and mails could readily avoid exposure to the plague, and the heat and other dangers of the desert journey could be very largely eliminated. Nevertheless, the British Government gave the Pasha's proposal a wide berth. The guarantee of a minimum rate of duties on commercial articles in transit might, it was thought, be interpreted as a guarantee of the line itself. Considering the delicate balance of the political situation in the Near East, the unfriendly relations existing between the Pasha and the Porte, and the necessity of keeping on good terms with the Sultan's Government at all events, caused the British authorities largely to ignore the proposition. Lacking British sanction of his enterprise, the Pasha considered it imprudent to continue with the construction of the line. The iron rails, being unloaded in Egypt, were left there to rust, the wooden ties were piled up and left to rot, while the railway became, for the time being, only a subject for speculation. Some twenty years were to elapse before the project came to fruition.

For two years after the adoption of the coöperative plan of communication of 1837, the Board of Control and the Directors of the East India Company anxiously watched the operation of the colossal experiment. They could not remain long in doubt as to the effective character of the results. In spite of the fact that a tremendous expense had been undertaken, the first cost alone of the steamers in operation having amounted to nearly £213,000,⁷⁷ the returns from private mails and passengers were rapidly mounting, while the estimated benefit to business interests in England and India more than compensated for the outlay. That the service was effective was demonstrated beyond doubt by the complaints which arose whenever the slightest interruption occurred in the transit. Indeed, a few business men grumbled that it was too effective, since sight drafts sent out by the overland route calculated on the usual six months' credit frequently reached the purchaser of goods before the goods, sent around the Cape, had been heard of. Bills had thus occasionally to be paid before the goods purchased were seen. This difficulty was soon remedied, however, by the simple expedient of extending the time of collection from six to nine months.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1837, No. 539, Min. of Ev., p. 64; *London Times*, 2 Oct., 1835; *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 193. One of the factors which contributed to the suspension of the railway project was the death at Alexandria on July 3, 1836, of Galloway Bey, who had been an intimate adviser of the Pasha and who had urged the building of the road. — *Ibid.*, XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 53.

⁷⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1843, No. 301, p. 1.

⁷⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XXV, N.S., Pt. II, 140. Cf. *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 372, pp. 107, 108.

Travellers who made the trip to or from India by the overland route, almost invariably preferred it to that by way of the Cape, although it was considerably more expensive and the passage through Egypt was frequently attended with discomforts. The Government, too, had ample reason to feel gratified at the speed with which despatches could be exchanged during the series of hostile manœuvres which filled the years after 1837. The issue with Persia in 1837-1838 was more readily terminated, danger from the Syrian crisis of 1838-1841 more easily guarded against, and the war with China much more effectively conducted because of the shortening of time-distances with the East.

One of the last steps in establishing the overland route was taken when a Post Office Convention between Britain and France was signed on May 10, 1839. This document, providing for "the conveyance through France of the Correspondence of the East Indies with England, and vice versa," outlined in detail the reciprocal agreements which had first been discussed two years earlier.⁷⁹ This document served as the basis for a series of other Post Office Conventions throughout the remainder of the century, and ranks with treaties of political alliance in its influence for peace. It was drawn up on the very eve of the dangerous political crisis growing out of the conquests of Mehemet Ali, and there can be little doubt that the understanding reached between the two countries at Paris in May, 1839, resting on a real need of coöperative action, exerted its moderating influences to prevent an open clash of the two Powers.

A few weeks afterward, on July 3, a measure was taken which may be considered the final act in the establishment of rapid and permanent postal communication with the East by the overland route. On this date the Court of Directors, with the approval of the Admiralty, Treasury, and Post Office Departments, sent to both the Bombay and Supreme Indian Governments a list of "Regulations for the Establishment of a Monthly Communication with India."⁸⁰ This set of instructions, based partly on the recent Post Office Convention with France, provided for the despatch of mails at either end of the long line once in every calendar month, gave the schedule to be observed at Suez, Alexandria, and Malta, and provided for all reasonable eventualities.

⁷⁹ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXVII, 1004-1012. See I. G. J. Hamilton, *An Outline of Postal History and Practise with a History of the Post Office of India* (Calcutta, 1910), p. 149; T. A. Curtis, *State of the Question of Steam-Communication with India via the Red Sea . . .* (London, 1839); Philo-Johannes, *A Modest Defence of the East-India Company's Management of Steam-Communication with India* (London, 1839).

⁸⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1843, No. 301, pp. 2, 3.

Thus was completed the first definite move in the bringing together of East and West. It had required much enterprise at both ends of the line to bring about its consummation, and still the right to use it depended on the good will of the Ottoman Porte and the coöperation of the feudatory government of Egypt. Yet it functioned well and regularly for purposes of communication. Some fifteen years had been required for this establishment since the first tangible step was taken, years characterized by a vast lot of speculation, promotion, controversy, exploration, and failure, but a definite beginning had been achieved. The success of the line to Bombay was but a greater argument for a service which would embrace Madras and Calcutta as well, yet not those communities alone. European interests in Singapore and Sydney were already clamoring for the extension of steam service to satisfy their growing needs. Already ephemeral "Steam Committees" were being formed and steam navigation companies projected. Moreover, a brief experience with monthly service sufficed to show that whereas it was both more serviceable and more profitable than a quarterly scheme, a fortnightly service would be more practicable still. Beyond that, although in 1840 few could see so clearly into the future, a regular weekly communication would be demanded, first to India, then to more outlying parts of the Empire. But even this would not suffice. The electric telegraph and submarine cable could instantly bridge distance, and the thought was father to the deed. Even here the elimination of time-distance has not paused.

The opening of the line to India by way of the Red Sea depended to a considerable extent on the success of the steam engine. Despite the funds subscribed, the active propaganda, and the voluble arguments of enthusiasts, the development of the overland route kept even pace with the mechanical evolution of the means of transportation. The history of this first stage in the opening of shorter lines to the East is due to the high pressure engine and improved steamship design, as well as to ready capital, large business interests, and extensive advertising. The further development of the overland route and subsidiary lines of transit epitomize the history of still other improvements. During the next fifteen years the steam engine continued to improve, the steamship was more scientifically propelled, the railway became a greater contributing factor to the reduction of long distances, and the electric telegraph played a much more important rôle. The days of the submarine cable, the screw propeller, the internal combustion engine and wireless telegraphy were still to come.

Still, in the development and application of mechanical ap-

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MAP OF LOWER EGYPT
Showing
**Overland, Railway and
Canal Routes**

LIBYAN
DESERT

pliances, the human element is everywhere present. Necessity is the mother of invention. Only as needs and stresses developed were new scientific principles sought. Only as these were discovered could they be applied; and the methods of application were always in keeping with human interests. At times the hesitation, the petty quibbling, the foolish errors so intimately associated with the opening of the new line of communication between London and Bombay seem strangely futile, yet this is but an inevitable feature of the adaptation of new and untried forces to the filling of a great human need; a feature of the trial and error method by which all revolutionary processes are carried out. The next fifteen years after the definite opening of the overland passage were also characterized by the promotion of doubtful enterprises, conflicting propaganda, intrigue and bitterness among those who wished an extension of lines of communication. Yet it was also a period of progress. The steam service was speeded up, steam vessels grew larger, more seaworthy and more numerous, and for the traveller a long voyage was no longer the tremendous ordeal it had been but a few years earlier. And at the end of the period lines of commercial transportation were preparing to follow those of communication with the cutting through of that single great barrier, the Isthmus of Suez.

CHAPTER X

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF COMMUNICATION

STEAM LINES in European and in Asiatic waters were phenomenally successful in eliminating time-distances and in drawing West and East together. By the middle of the nineteenth century the indispensability of the overland route could no longer be denied even by the most skeptical. But while steam vessels arriving in Egyptian waters annually became larger and more powerful, increasing in the comfort of their appointments and in their independence of the elements, one great problem remained to be solved before this route could compete commercially with the Cape route or realize its full development as an artery of communication. This problem was concerned with the passage through Egypt. Mails, passengers, and goods continued to suffer the delays and discomforts consequent upon having to pursue a tortuous course between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. This portion of the route to the East had failed to keep pace with improvements elsewhere because of both political and material obstacles to facile transit.

Prior to the formation of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, relatively little had been accomplished in the way of simplifying or systematizing the passage through Egypt.¹ A series of station houses had been built in the desert between Cairo and Suez in 1838, but they were pitifully inadequate from the start because of the rapidly growing number of passengers travelling by the overland route.² The hotels which had been established by rival promoters at Suez were small and

¹ *Gallery of Illustration: The Route of the Overland Mail to India from Southampton to Calcutta*, pp. 7, 8, ff. This pamphlet was prepared by Thos. Grieve, Capt. Moresby, and others connected with the P. & O.

² *Asiatic Journal*, XXXV, N.S., Pt. II, 283-284; Arthur Anderson, *Communication with India, China, etc., via Egypt* (London, [1843]). Not all overland passengers crossed from Suez to Cairo. An alternative line provided for the passage of tourists over the hundred miles between Cosseir on the Red Sea and Thebes on the Nile. P. & O. vessels for a time stopped at Cosseir in going to and from Suez. This line never became a main highway, however, and stops at Cosseir were discontinued after a few years.

dirty, and did little to remove from that dismal spot its early reputation of being the most desolate place on earth. Some attempts had been made to provide for the transportation of passengers and luggage across the desert and between Cairo and Alexandria, but it was only after 1840 that springless carriages and vans replaced the somewhat less convenient donkeys and camels formerly provided for conveyance.³ One of the chief improvements made during the early period of steam communication was the opening up and improvement of the Mahmoudie Canal by Mehemet Ali between 1819 and 1837. The canal, although little more than a wide ditch, provided a water communication between the port of Alexandria and the Nile at Atfeh, a distance of forty miles, and thus made unnecessary a difficult caravan or wagon ride at this end of the journey. However, the equipment at first placed on the canal consisted of small track-boats drawn by donkeys, boats which were not only open to the elements and altogether comfortless, but were generally swarming with vermin. The slow sailing vessels on the Nile between Atfeh and Boulac, the port of Cairo, were little better. The concern of British and Indian authorities in opening the overland route had been the acceleration of the mails. It remained for a private corporation to undertake to improve the facilities for passenger transportation.

The passage through Egypt underwent a series of mild improvements with the beginning of the through service of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. In 1841, as a result of the visit to Egypt of Arthur Anderson, one of the founders of the Company, another steamer was placed on the Nile and improved trackboats on the Mahmoudie Canal for the simultaneous accommodation of passengers going in both directions.⁴ Other river steamers were put under construction for the same purpose. Late in the year 1841, after the termination of hostilities in the Levant, Anderson was able to conclude an arrangement with Mehemet Ali whereby the track across the desert between Cairo and Suez should be mended and cleared of loose stones. The Pasha also promised special protection to goods and

³ See Charles Dickens, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal*, Sat., 17 Aug., 1850 (Vol. I, No. 21), p. 499, "The Life and Labours of Lieutenant Waghorn"; George Parbury, *Haul-Book for India and Egypt, Comprising the Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to England* . . . (2d ed., London, 1842).

⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXV, N.S., Pt. II, 284; *ibid.*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 241, 242. The *Cairo*, which was sent out in 1841 to supplement the *Lotus* already plying on the Nile, was an iron vessel, described as "a remarkably elegant vessel, similar in appearance to those steamers called the *Watermen*, running between London and Woolwick." The *Cairo* accommodated a hundred passengers.

passengers in transit.⁵ Bonded packages were not to be opened. The Company was thereafter permitted to use any kind of vehicle for the transportation service, to build depots and magazines, and to place their own steamers under the British flag on both the Nile and the Mahmoudie Canal.⁶ In consideration of these concessions, the Company engaged its Egyptian representatives, Messrs. Briggs and Company, to keep a record of all goods taken through Egypt and to pay annually a transit duty of one-half per cent *ad valorem*, instead of the previous three per cent. The Company, in turn, added the amount of this duty to its transportation charges on goods sent in either direction by private shippers. This agreement was reënforced and supplemented by a code of regulations published by the orders of the Pasha on May 13, 1843.⁷

In consequence of these improvements, it was next proposed to revive the project of the Egyptian Railway, particularly that section from Cairo to Suez, which had remained in abeyance since the death of the Pasha's engineer, Galloway Bey, and the simultaneous rise of political difficulties, in 1835. Mehemet Ali again signified his willingness to construct a line between Cairo and Suez, a distance of about 100 miles,⁸ at his own expense, and equip the line for passenger as well as commercial transportation, if he were assured by the British Post Office of a definite payment for the carriage of British mails. This proposal, which had the support of the P. and O. Company as well as many smaller concerns operating in or through Egypt, had much to recommend it. A laborious journey of twenty-four to twenty-eight hours would be reduced to a comparatively comfortable trip of only a few hours, and better steamship schedules could be maintained both in the Mediterranean and in eastern waters.

The plan enjoyed but a brief day in the limelight, however. Mehemet Ali did give orders for the resumption of work on the road. The carrying out of the plan was conditioned, however,

⁵ The first part, at least, of this agreement was not carried out. See John Alexander Galloway, *Observations on the Proposed Improvements in the Overland Route via Egypt, with remarks on the Ship Canal, the Boulac Canal, and the Suez Railroad* (London, 1844), pp. 5, 6.

⁶ F.O. 97/408, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847. A steam tug with a screw propeller was used on the Mahmoudie Canal, one of the first instances where this type of propulsion was commercially employed.

⁷ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 323, 398; *ibid.*, 3d Ser., I, 327; Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-26; [Thomas Waghorn], *Messrs. Waghorn & Company's Overland Guide to India* (London, 1844), pp. 63, 64.

⁸ The anonymous writer of the pamphlet, *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt* (London, 1846), insisted (pp. 45, 46) that the railway would not need to be more than 90 miles in length, and that there were no engineering difficulties in the way, in contrast with those inherent in a ship canal.

by the Pasha's requirement that "the British Government agree to certain arrangements for the future payment for conveying the mails, when the railroad is finished."⁹ J. A. Galloway, the English engineer in charge, immediately took up the matter with Sir Robert Peel in October, 1843, who referred the subject to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen. Late in October, Aberdeen replied stating that "Her Majesty's Government would direct the Consul-General to give his countenance to the undertaking."¹⁰ This was not enough to satisfy the Pasha, who was already under fire, and he insisted that he be guaranteed a revenue of a piastre (about 2½d.) per letter on the mails transported through Egypt. But at this point the British Cabinet balked, unwilling to endanger the recent arrangement concerning Egypt by official guarantees of any kind.

Meanwhile the French had not been idle. Representatives in Egypt of the French Government protested vigorously against the prosecution of a plan which would rival the canal already projected by French capitalists.¹¹ The old Pasha therefore reluctantly abandoned for the second time a scheme which he believed would at once benefit Egypt and Great Britain without seriously endangering the interests of other countries.¹² Thus rebuffed in one of his favorite projects, Mehemet Ali set about accomplishing at least a part of his object, that of profiting from the essential nature of the route through Egypt for the eastern mails. This had been uppermost in his mind ever since the opening of the overland route.¹³

The first step taken in the new plan of action was the removal from the Peninsular and Oriental Company of many of the exclusive privileges which had been granted them less than three years before. In 1844, the Company sent out to Egypt a new steamer, the *Delta*, to replace one of the older steamers navigating the Nile. The British Government was expected to give support in securing permission to operate the new vessel on the Nile, but it refused to do so, pending the outcome of negotiations on a new series of contracts being prepared for the carriage of mails to the East. The Pasha, scenting a favorable opportunity for beginning a series of encroachments on the monopolies

⁹ Galloway, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13. This instruction was actually issued. — F.O. 97/408, C. A. Murray to Lord Palmerston, 4 Nov., 1846.

¹¹ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., III, 427; *ibid.*, IV, 207; *Messrs. Waghorn & Company's Overland Guide to India*, pp. 72-73.

¹² *London Times*, 29 Jan., 1845; *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., IV, 439.

¹³ F.O. 97/408, A "Separate and Confidential" communication from Murray to Palmerston, 4 Nov., 1846.

which British concerns had acquired in the transit arrangements, thereupon refused a license for the use of the *Delta* on the Nile, stating that he was contemplating a complete reorganization of the transit.¹⁴

Shortly afterward a new monopoly was created under license from the Pasha known as the Egyptian Transit Company. The circumstances surrounding its origin do not appear to have become wholly known in England at any time, but within a few years its character was largely discovered. The Transit Company proved to be a private monopoly, chartered and financed by the Pasha, and headed by two Englishmen who had already, in 1843, bought out the desert transit business of Messrs. Hill and Company.¹⁵ These men were given sole rights of transporting mails, passengers and goods through Egypt, their monopoly of transport being supported by proclamations of the Pasha that no person might pass through the country except in the conveyances belonging to the Transit Company.¹⁶ At the same time, the privileges granted to the P. and O. Company in September, 1841, for employing their boats on the Nile and the Mahmoudie Canal, were revoked, and they were asked to state the conditions under which they would be willing to transfer their somewhat extensive equipment to the new concern. The Company refused to consider disposing of their equipment, and attempted to carry on their own transit between Alexandria and Cairo by chartering their new and commodious steamer *Delta* to the Agent of the East India Company so that the mail service might be continued under privileges long possessed by that Company. This scheme was immediately thwarted by the Pasha, however, and the steam outfit of the P. and O. Company remained idle at Alexandria for well over a year. When at last it became sufficiently obvious that, even in consequence of the new postal contracts awarded the P. and O. Company in 1845, the right of navigating the Nile would not be renewed, negotiations for the sale of the entire equipment of the Company in Egypt were begun and eventually consummated.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter from Briggs & Co. to the P. and O. Company, 26 Oct., 1844. The Pasha had never conceded to the P. and O. Company the right of navigating the Nile, but had merely issued licenses to that effect for specified vessels, a privilege which might be withdrawn at any time. It was argued that he would have stopped the transit altogether if he had dared, but the author has found no evidence of such a desire.

¹⁵ See (Anon.), *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, pp. 29-33; F.O. 97/408, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847; John A. Galloway, *Observations on the Proposed Improvements in the Overland Route* (1844).

¹⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., IV, 440; *Illustrated London News*, 8 Nov., 1845, p. 292.

¹⁷ F.O. 97/408, Capt. John Lyons, E. I. Co. Agent, to the Secret Committee of the East India Co., 8 Oct., 1846. The last of the equipment was not turned over to the Pasha until February, 1848.

Only the British mails remained free from the Pasha's direct control under the new system. These still were conveyed through Egypt by Post Office agents under the care of the British Consul-General and with the protection of the Egyptian Government.¹⁸ In 1845, however, a Postal Convention between the British and Egyptian Governments was made necessary because of the altered state of the Egyptian transit. This Convention, which was to last for five years, was based on the Anglo-French arrangements for the transit of British and Indian mails along the line between Marseilles and Channel ports. By this new arrangement, Mehemet Ali was permitted to levy a tariff on letters and newspapers at so much per pound, the conveyance of mails through Egypt thereafter to be at the Pasha's expense.¹⁹ Passengers continued to pay for their passage through Egypt such monopolistic rates as the Transit Company chose to levy. In accordance with a promise made by the Pasha, commercial wares transported through Egypt by the Transit Company passed at the low rate of $\frac{1}{2}\%$ *ad valorem*. The Transit Company could care for only very small quantities of goods, however, and on such as were transported by other means the Pasha collected duties at 3%, the rate prescribed by the Balta-Liman Convention of 1838 between Great Britain and the Porte.²⁰ Thus, with the exercise of considerable patience and judgment, Mehemet Ali largely succeeded in carrying out one of his dearest projects; that of controlling as well as encouraging the use of the route through Egypt. Only one more measure remained to be taken, that of removing the monopoly granted to the Egyptian Transit Company. It had served its turn. It had averted open hostility which might otherwise have followed the termination of the licenses of the Peninsular and Oriental Company because the new beneficiaries of the Pasha's favor were Englishmen.

About the beginning of the year 1846 the Egyptian Transit Company was broken up with the assistance of the Pasha's French advisers, and the transit business was made a branch of the governmental administration.²¹ Frenchmen were appointed to take charge of the details of the operation of the transit, replacing the English *concessionnaires* of the previous Transit Company. This was a considerable blow to British pride, and there was no little

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, H. Johnson, Packet Agent at Alexandria, to Col. Maberly, 12 Aug., and 2 Oct., 1846. No especial provision was made in the Postal Convention for the mails to be accompanied, however. See *ibid.*, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847.

¹⁹ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., IV, 439, 440.

²⁰ F.O. 97/408, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847; Report of Consul A. S. Walne.

²¹ F.O. 97/408, Murray to Palmerston, 4 Nov., 1846, 6 June, 1847; J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez*, I, 185.

grumbling at home at the policy of the Government which permitted this most essential link in the chain of communications with the East to come into the hands of those hostile to British interests. "In spite of the importance of rapid communication with India, and in spite of the example of Austria and France, who have occupied half the route to India with their steamers, both the British Government and the East India Company persist in neglecting the route through Egypt," complained one writer.²²

These events, following hard upon numerous evidences of French hostility to English capital and English influence in Egypt, gave considerable concern to the British Government. Palmerston voiced his regrets that the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company had to be turned over to Mehemet Ali,²³ and instructed the Consul-General in Egypt, Mr. C. A. Murray, to use all of his influence to maintain the employment of British capital and personnel as far as possible in connection with the line of communications through Egypt. Murray was particularly instructed to keep alive the project of an Egyptian railway as a counterpoise to the canal scheme which was beginning to take on unpleasant proportions.

Nevertheless, the immediate effects of the establishment of an Egyptian Transit Administration by Mehemet Ali were calculated to remove British apprehensions as far as possible. Facilities for passage, instead of becoming worse, became better. On both sections of the line through Egypt, charges for passengers were reduced, not only below the prices charged by the Transit Company, but even below those formerly charged by the Peninsular and Oriental Company.²⁴ The comfort and safety of passengers was studied, the equipment on both branches of the line through Egypt was constantly augmented, the number of desert station houses was doubled, and the road across the desert was greatly improved.²⁵ There remained some question as to the final disposition of the desert station houses. At the time of their construction in 1838 with the funds of the Bombay Steam Committee, it was understood that the Committee's agent was to have sole right to govern their employment over a period of ten years. This right

²² *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, p. 3.

²³ F.O. 97/408, H. U. Addington, of the Foreign Office, to Arthur Anderson, 5 Feb., 1847.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847; report of Consul Alfred S. Walne.

²⁵ F.O. 97/408, Report of Consul A. S. Walne; *ibid.*, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847; *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 25; *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, pp. 29-33; F. W. Simms, *England to Calcutta, by the Overland Route, in 1845 . . .* (London, 1875); T. H. Osborne, *A New Guide to the Levant . . . together with Tables of all the Mediterranean Steamers . . .* (London, 1840).

was then to be renewable upon formal application by the British Consul-General. Upon terminating the concession to the Egyptian Transit Company, Robert Thurburn, one of its founders, who also held a lease from the Bombay Steam Committee for the desert stations, was deprived of his right to control these stations. They were thereupon occupied by appointees of Mehemet Ali without either explanation or compensation to the interested Bombay parties. There ensued a period of doubt as to what line of conduct should be pursued by the Bombay authorities, but as the desert transit was efficiently conducted under the new Transit Administration, the issue was allowed to lie dormant.²⁶

In most respects the Transit Administration was a success. It replaced the separate establishments on the Nile and across the desert with a single unified system administered as a branch of the Egyptian Government. The number of passengers using the overland route in the first year after it was officially opened was 275. By 1845 this had grown to 2100, and by 1847 it had increased to more than 3000. Transit equipment had been increased in proportion. In 1843 only 50 camels were employed in connection with the transit. In 1846, 2563 were in use. In addition to these 440 horses and 46 vans transported the passengers between Cairo and Suez. The Nile establishment had grown to four steamers, with three steam tugs and a number of track-boats in addition on the Mahmoudie Canal.²⁷ This arrangement, with some alterations and improvements as traffic increased and the Egyptian Railway became a reality, was not essentially altered until the opening of the Suez Canal, which made the overland route, as far as regular traffic through Egypt was concerned, a thing of the past.²⁸ Meanwhile the rapid increase in both mails and passengers through Egypt could but call further attention to the advantages which would inevitably accrue from the construction of some more modern and adequate means of conveyance, a railway or a canal.²⁹

²⁶ F.O. 97/408, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847, Report of Consul A. S. Walne.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Murray to Palmerston, 6 June, 1847.

²⁸ For the details of the arrangements provided for passenger transportation through Egypt in 1854, see [Melville Grindlay], *Hints for Travellers to India, China and Australia* (3d ed., London, 1854), pp. 14-17.

²⁹ The year 1850 was marked by the death of Thomas Waghorn, one of the principal agitators for the opening and development of the overland route. His employments remained characteristic to the last; he repeatedly made test trips between England and India and Egypt and England with mails or despatches, attempting to find the speediest route. After the failure of his transport service between Cairo and Suez, Waghorn set up in business as forwarding agent, and in 1848 he entered into partnership with Mr. George Wheatley. This arrangement is still represented by G. W. Wheatley & Co. of London. Many of Waghorn's enterprises were undertaken at his own expense in the hope of repayment, and at the time of his death he

One of the greatest handicaps to improvements in service on the overland route proved to be the very element which gave the greatest measure of stability to the establishment of the line in the beginning. This was the fact that the line was operated by departments of government. The operation of the line, in consequence, was subject to all the evils of bureaucracy, such as delay, lack of coördination, irresponsibility, carelessness, neglect, and bungling in general. Such evils were the more pronounced because the steam service, instead of being unified under one department of government, was subject to the direction of several departments of more than one government. The European end of the line was subject to the whims of the Admiralty, the Post Office, the Treasury, and, in some respects, of the Foreign and Colonial Offices. The coöperation of the India Board and the Court of Directors was also required. The eastern end of the line was controlled by various departments of the Bombay Government under instructions from the Supreme Government at Calcutta, which, in turn, were guided by despatches from the Court of Directors at home. The very essential Egyptian section of the line came under neither set of authorities and was the source of problems more or less baffling to both. The one great advantage in the governmental control and operation of the line lay in the unlimited financial backing thus supplied. No private corporations, however strong in capital, could have hoped to succeed at the outset, when initial expenses were tremendously great, mistakes and disasters frequent, and income slight.³⁰

However, once the line was in full operation and its value fully appraised, public sentiment veered strongly toward its continuation under private commercial management. Government was concerned mainly with the sending of despatches and very little with the economics of private business. It was content to de-

was heavily in debt. One of his sisters is reported to have died in a London workhouse, and another was rescued from a similar institution and given a small pension. Thus in some respects Waghorn was singularly a failure, due largely to his proclivity for making enemies. Some recognition had come before his death, however. He was given the title of Lieutenant in 1842 by the Admiralty, and in the year before his death he had been granted a small pension by the East India Company, only one quarterly instalment of which had been paid prior to his death. Waghorn, however, did succeed in establishing a legend; and if he failed to receive due recognition during his life, the eulogies which have been lavished upon his memory have at least in part atoned. See *Household Words: A Weekly Journal*, I, 494-501; *Chatham and Rochester Observer*, 8 March, 1884; *Bombay Gazette*, 28 March, 1884.

³⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., I, 325. The greater part of this expense was borne by the British Government. In 1838-1839 the net cost to the East India Company of the steam establishments on both sides of Egypt was £30,012. — *Parl. Pap.*, 1840, No. 353, p. 3.

velop slowly, keeping well behind the actual needs of the public. Private enterprise, on the other hand, found profit in keeping abreast of business conditions and in anticipating public needs. Government heads were satisfied with a single chain of steam communications, terminating at Falmouth or Southampton on one end and at Bombay on the other, disregarding the pleas of the other presidencies of India and the rising clamor of the growing British communities in China, the Straits, Australia, and New Zealand for more effective intercourse with the mother country. Private enterprise took cognizance of all of these fields of endeavor. The history of the development of steam communication with the East after 1839, therefore, is the record of private initiative backed by government support supplanting government owned and operated lines.³¹

Some of the first projects for more adequate lines of steam communication came from that portion of India where the urge was greatest. The citizens of Calcutta and Madras could not take advantage of a steam navy as Bombay did, hence they sought other means of improving their contacts with Europe. Early in the year 1839, the subscribers to the Bengal Steam Fund adopted resolutions favoring the early realization of a "comprehensive" plan of steam communication; that is, an arrangement whereby all of the Indian Presidencies would be included in a single system of steam communication. Very soon such a project came up for definite consideration. The Steam Committee of London, headed by a Mr. T. A. Curtis, projected a joint stock steam navigation company for the operation of steamships both in European and Asiatic waters to bring all of the presidencies into one system which might later be extended to China and Australia. Profits were anticipated from the carriage of mails, passengers, and goods, as well as from subsidies.³²

The Calcutta Steam Association considered the plan worthy of support, and called in a portion of their steam subscriptions to be sent to the English agent of the Association, Capt. James Barber, to assist the new organization, popularly known as the Comprehensive Company.³³ In this the Madras Steam Association joined, while Bombay gave the proposition a wide berth.³⁴

³¹ This was a normal attitude for government to take. Governmental regulation of private enterprise is perhaps always more effective than governmental ownership and operation in which the competitive element is lacking. — See *Map of the Overland Route between England and India; Showing also Other Lines of Communication* (London, 1842).

³² *Asiatic Journal*, XXVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 11, 163; *ibid.*, XXIX, N.S. Pt. II, 89, 90, 216; *ibid.*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 269, 270. ³³ *Ibid.*, XXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 247, 269.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 247; *ibid.*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. II, 29, 30; *Madras Courier*, 16 Sept., 1839. The *Bombay Times* for 28 Sept., 1839, did contain this statement, however:

While the London company was still in an early stage of development, a large public meeting of those interested in steam communication was held in Calcutta for the purpose of protesting to Parliament and to the East India Company against the many abuses in the existing communications, whereby Calcutta was at the mercy of the Bombay authorities. After petitions had been drawn up and adopted, a partial remedy for the evil was proposed by Mr. Thomas E. M. Turton, one of the active members of the Bengal Steam Committee. He proposed that while the Comprehensive concern was perfecting its plans for establishing a monthly communication over the whole line between England and India, the Calcutta group should promote the comprehensive scheme by purchasing a single large steamer and establishing a quarterly service between Calcutta and Suez. Such a vessel, he maintained, would thus be the "precursor" of others to follow, and upon the completion of the Comprehensive plan would be absorbed by it.³⁵

This "Precursor" plan proved to be the apple of discord in the garden of steam hopes. The Calcutta Steam Committee immediately broke up into two warring factions. The first, led by C. B. Greenlaw, Secretary of the Bengal Steam Fund, held that any deviation from the plan outlined by the promoters of the Comprehensive plan would likely wreck it, especially since strong opposition had already developed in London. Turton and his friends, on the other hand, being large subscribers to the Steam Fund, stoutly argued that enough time had already been wasted in vainly waiting for an adequate communication, and that the proposed *Precursor* would but hasten the complete steam navigation system. They agreed to make common cause with the Comprehensives if the latter could get under way at once, but otherwise they were determined to put their own vessel into service.³⁶ Between the two factions bitter hostility soon developed, practically disrupting the Bengal Steam Association and making it exceedingly unlikely that all of the subscriptions to the fund would ever be paid in or employed as originally planned.

It would be unprofitable to follow all of the turnings in the squabble between the two groups in Calcutta. The quarrel at times was partially patched up and a semblance of unity restored.

"We shall always be ready to join heart and hand with our Calcutta contemporaries in hastening the accomplishment of any such scheme of steamers for this employment; but we shall ever oppose any interference with the steady despatch of the overland mails between Suez and Bombay. . ."

³⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXI, N.S., Pt. II, 7-13, 99-104, 149.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

But as the issue presently degenerated into a matter of personal hostility, each party determined to succeed at the expense of the other. In October, 1839, Turton and his associates undertook to form a company under the name of "Eastern Steam Navigation Company" for the building or purchasing of a *Precursor* of 1200 to 1500 tons, to be propelled by engines of 450 horsepower.³⁷ This presently led to a secession of the Precursorites and completed the rupture. The Comprehensive group thereupon continued their attachment to the London plan, now launched as the East India Steam Navigation Company, although no complete union with the London group was ever effected.³⁸

At this juncture, the Comprehensives received a severe setback by the refusal of the East India Company to lend the slightest countenance to the undertaking. The Directors stated that they fully appreciated the motives which had led to the formation of the East India Steam Navigation Company, and that they were willing to give encouragement to any *established* means of comprehensive communication, but that they "could not support this project in its present stage."³⁹ At this psychological moment there appeared on the scene an established concern, the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company, whose history epitomizes the development of steam shipping in eastern seas after 1840.

This concern may be said to have originated in 1815. In that momentous year a Mr. Brodie McGhee Willcox set up in business in London as shipbroker and commission agent. He soon associated with him a young man from the Shetland Isles, Arthur Anderson, who became a partner in the firm of Willcox and Anderson in 1822. By this time a regular trade had been established with ports of the Peninsula, Oporto, Lisbon, and Gibraltar, with a fleet of sailing vessels. In 1835 Messrs. Willcox and Anderson became the operating agents for a line of steam vessels owned by Messrs. Bourne of Dublin. As this service appeared to promise success, other steamers were chartered, and in 1836 five first class steamers were put under construction for the Peninsular line.⁴⁰

Prior to September 4, 1837, English mails to Lisbon were

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 104.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. II, 3-5, 95-97, 215, 311; *ibid.*, XXXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 1, 2. The Madras Steam Committee was meanwhile giving the Comprehensive scheme its whole support.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. II, 1.

⁴⁰ *The Blue Peter*, I, No. 2 (Sept., 1921), 43, 44 (an historical summary of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, by Mr. F. A. Hook, of the Lamson Agency); R. W. Cornewall-Jones, *The British Merchant Service* (London, 1898), p. 146.

conveyed weekly by Post Office sailing packets, wind and weather permitting. At the same time, the mail communication with Cadiz and Gibraltar was only once a month by Admiralty steamer. In comparison with this inadequate service, the commercial packets of Messrs. Willcox and Anderson showed a great improvement. The firm's first request for a contract for carrying the Peninsular mails was very coldly received by the Post Office, however, for the theory had long prevailed that official mails should be carried only by official agencies. Public demands for a more improved service caused a reconsideration of the mail service before long, and Willcox and Anderson were awarded a contract in competition with their single rival, the British and Foreign Steam Navigation Company.⁴¹

In carrying out their contract, Willcox and Anderson made extensive improvements in their lines. No sooner had the service commenced to be profitable than it was further developed. First it was extended, on a commercial basis, to Malta, and then to Alexandria, successfully competing with French and Austrian steam lines. This development, coupled with the growing confidence of the Government in the transportation of mails and despatches by private enterprise under contract, paved the way for the continuation of the Company's transit service first to Egypt and later into the eastern seas.⁴²

Between September 4, 1837, and September 1, 1840, the India mails using the overland route were forwarded every fourth Saturday from Falmouth for Gibraltar in the vessels of the Peninsular Company. At Gibraltar they were transferred to an Admiralty steamer and carried to Malta, whence they were conveyed to Alexandria by another Admiralty steamer, the homeward bound mails, of course, being transmitted in reverse order. However, as the Peninsular packets had to call at Vigo, Oporto, Lisbon, and Cadiz in their passage to and from Gibraltar, and the Admiralty packets in the Mediterranean were of no more than 140 horsepower,⁴³ the transmission of the mails between England and Egypt frequently required three weeks or even a month. The establishment of a line from Marseilles through France

⁴¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. 364-365, "A Statement of the Principal Facts connected with the Establishment and Extension of Steam Communications with India, China, etc., by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company," by Arthur Anderson; *The P. & O. Pocket Book* (3d issue, London, 1908), p. 8. The first mail steamer to sail under contract, the *Iberia*, was despatched from Falmouth 4 Sept., 1837. The contract called for vessels of 140 horsepower. Those actually put on the line rated at 250 horsepower.

⁴² *The Blue Peter*, I, 44; *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 19.

⁴³ Some of these had been in service since English steamers first appeared in the Mediterranean in 1825.

about the middle of 1839 also failed to work the advantage expected.⁴⁴

These matters caused the British Government to intimate to the managers of the Peninsular Company that a plan for expediting the mails on the entire line between Alexandria and England would be welcomed. The Company thereupon proposed to establish a complete line of large and powerful steamers, rating 1800 tons and 430 horsepower, to operate this line, touching only at Gibraltar and Malta.⁴⁵ This scheme was unofficially approved by the Government, the actual contract for the service being let on the basis of public tenders. The Peninsular Company found three competitors on this occasion, but easily won the contract, agreeing to transport the mails for a smaller sum even than that required for the inadequate Admiralty packets.⁴⁶ By such stages the Peninsular Company acquired an experience, an equipment, and a capital which enabled them to consider a line of mail packets from Suez to eastern ports.

The Peninsular Company had not been without considerable competition in European waters, and from the time that an eastern service was first considered it was evident that the project would not have clear sailing. Considerable influence was brought to bear both on members of Government and on public opinion by rival interests to prevent the entrance of the Peninsular concern into Asiatic waters at all.⁴⁷ Chief among these competitors were the embryonic East India Steam Navigation Company, which boasted members of Parliament in its organization, and the Eastern Steam Navigation Company, called the "Precursorites." The Peninsular Company with its wide experience, large capital, and growing fleet of steam vessels naturally bade fair to wreck the plans, if not the aims, of both groups of Indian investors who, as subscribers to the Bengal Fund, had been laboring for so many years to place in service a line of large steamships which would be owned and controlled in the eastern presidencies.⁴⁸ For a considerable time, therefore, the London Committee of the Comprehensives left nothing undone to retard the cause of the Peninsular Company.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 367.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-368. The first vessels placed on this line were the *Oriental*, 1600 tons and 450 horsepower, and the *Great Liverpool*, 1540 tons and 464 horsepower. These vessels were already constructed at the time the contract was let.

⁴⁶ *London Times*, 11 Nov., 1838. ⁴⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 370.

⁴⁸ In fact, in remitting funds to the London Committee in 1840, the Calcutta Comprehensives made it clear that they did so only on condition that the East India Steam Navigation Company establish headquarters in Calcutta. — *Asiatic Journal*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. II, 96.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 311; *ibid.*, XXXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 1.

Meanwhile, in the midst of dissension and bickering, the Comprehensives and Precursors had each contracted for the construction of a large steam vessel, although adequate funds were lacking in both cases. The knowledge of this situation and the need for a measure of Indian coöperation led Messrs. Willcox and Anderson to propose a merger to the London Comprehensive group. The projectors of the East India Steam Navigation Company were offered seats in the direction of the Peninsular Company and the Comprehensive subscribers were to receive proportional shares in a new stock issue of the Peninsular Company, which was about to increase its capitalization and become a joint stock concern.⁵⁰

Before all the details of the amalgamation had been adjusted, the Peninsular Company had received a royal charter of incorporation, dated December 31, 1840, constituting it the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.⁵¹ The charter was granted, however, subject to the conditions —

That the Company should open an improved steam communication with India throughout, from England, within two years from the date of the charter. That all steam vessels to be constructed by the Company, of 400-horse power and upwards, should be so strengthened and otherwise arranged as to be able to carry and fire guns of the largest calibre then used in Her Majesty's steam vessels of war. That the Government should have a power of inspection, as to their being maintained in good and efficient sea-worthy condition, and that the Company should not sell any of such vessels without giving the pre-emption of purchase to the Government.⁵²

Early in 1841 arrangements for the absorption of the East India Steam Navigation Company were completed, the promoters of this enterprise receiving positions in the directorate of the Peninsular and Oriental Company as previously proposed.⁵³

⁵⁰ Cornewall-Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁵¹ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 2, 197-198; *The P. & O. Pocket Book*, pp. 8-9; *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 70. The Company was incorporated with a proposed capital of £1,500,000.

⁵² *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 370. The Government was also to have the right to commandeer any of the vessels of this eastern fleet in time of war. Toward this new establishment the East India Company agreed to pay £20,000 annually for five years.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 154-155. Arthur Anderson stated before a Select Parliamentary Committee in 1851 that of the £300,000 subscribed by the Comprehensives, only about £30,000 was actually paid in. Cf. *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 16.

Negotiations had meanwhile been started with Turton and his associates of the Eastern Steam Navigation Company for effecting a combination with the Peninsular Company. Nothing tangible came of repeated overtures at first. Nevertheless, when the new Peninsular and Oriental Company was formed, three seats in the Board of Directors were reserved for the Precursorites, should they choose to come in on the same terms as had been offered their competitors. Until some time in 1841, the Precursorites hoped to realize their program and actually place their first vessel on the Suez-Calcutta line, to be followed by others subsequently. On November 17, however, a meeting of the shareholders of the Eastern Steam Navigation Company was held in Calcutta at which the fate of the concern was determined. A proposal to renew negotiations with the P. and O. Company was passed and the merger was approved subject to the conditions already offered to the Precursorites.⁵⁴

Thus passed from the scene one of the last of the many attempts of the English in India to develop lines of steam vessels according to their own plans.⁵⁵ English capital and the favor of the British Government and East India Company provided a combination too effective to be withstood by the independent and uncertain Indian interests. Following the formal dissolution of the Eastern Steam Navigation Company in Calcutta, the London faction, led by the belligerent Turton, who was one of the principal stockholders of the concern, still refused to consider the sale of the *Precursor* or the abandonment of the plan, meanwhile striving desperately to secure funds with which to complete the vessel and place her in service.⁵⁶ The task proved to be hopeless. With bankruptcy staring them in the face, those who had contracted for the building of the *Precursor* were compelled to offer her for sale in 1842 "for the protection of themselves for the many and great liabilities they have incurred."⁵⁷ With all conditions attending the purchase removed, she was purchased by the P. and O. Company for £45,000 and added to the eastern fleet of that Company for the carrying out of a new mail contract with the Government and East India Company.

⁵⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 252; *ibid.*, XXXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 133-134.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, XXXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 254-255; *ibid.*, XXXVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 16, 127, 416.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, XXXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 184-185.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, XXXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 103; *ibid.*, 3d Ser., III, 322, 545; *ibid.*, 3d Ser., IV, 324 539, 540. The *Precursor*, of 1800 tons and 520 horsepower, was completed in March, 1842, at a cost of £80,000. Following her purchase by the P. and O. Company, she was considerably altered, and was sent out to India in 1844, arriving at Calcutta on 26 Dec.

The two years allowed to the Peninsular and Oriental Company by their charter for laying the foundations of an eastern steam service were employed in the building of two new steam vessels, the preparation of coaling and docking facilities, and in improving the transit through Egypt. The first of the new eastern fleet to be completed, the *Hindustan*, of 1800 tons and 520 horsepower, was ready for sea in the early autumn of 1842. Commanded by Capt. Robert Moresby, late of the Indian Navy, the vessel left for India on September 24, making several stops *en route*, and arrived at Calcutta after a voyage of eighty-seven days. Shortly afterward a sister vessel, the *Bentinck*, was launched at Liverpool, and was despatched from Southampton for Calcutta on August 24, 1843, making the voyage around the Cape of Good Hope in about equal time.⁵⁸ With this steam equipment, to which the *Precursor* was shortly added, an experimental series of monthly voyages was commenced between Calcutta, Madras, Ceylon, Aden, and Suez, which proved to be practicable from the very start. The first mails destined for Calcutta by the new line were sent out from London in 1843, and from the beginning of the next year service, although not yet completely provided for by contract, was regular.⁵⁹

An investigation of the cost of operation of the line between Suez and Bombay by the comparatively small armed steam vessels of the Indian Navy disclosed the interesting fact that although the average speed of these vessels was low, their expenses were correspondingly high. Believing that they were in a position to offer better service at lower cost, the Peninsular and Oriental Company made a proposal to the East India Company in August, 1843, offering to relieve the latter of the Bombay line of communication and to substitute for the steam vessels of the Indian Navy, which averaged only about 200 horsepower, their own fine vessels of 520 horsepower. This service was to be

⁵⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 253-254; *ibid.*, 3d Ser., II, 326, 432; Low, *op. cit.*, II, 138-140. Moresby, who had conducted surveys of the Red Sea and adjacent waters with such conspicuous success, and had afterwards commanded various steamers of the Indian Navy, finally left that service in 1841, disgusted with the lack of appreciation shown him by the East India Company. The entry of the P. & O. into the eastern field opened up a new and attractive career, and until his final retirement in 1846, he was considered the ablest commander in the service of that company.

⁵⁹ *Asiatic Journal*, XL, N.S., Pt. II, pp. 39, 40; *ibid.*, 3d Ser., I, 326-327; II, 85-86. That the stockholders of the Company did not suffer from the vast expense contingent upon carrying the new program into effect is indicated by the fact that the dividends during these years averaged over 7%, leaving considerable sums still as undivided profits.

undertaken for an annual sum of £80,000, thus saving the East India Company about £30,000 for the transit of the mails.⁶⁰

The Court of Directors did not respond to this plan, and it lapsed. In lieu of this, however, responsible members of the British Government suggested that the P. and O. Company extend their regular service eastward to the Straits and China, a service which had been carried on for some time in desultory fashion by the Bengal Government.⁶¹ Before this was acted upon, an unofficial but important Committee, consisting of representatives of the India Board, the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, the India House, the Post Office, and the House of Commons, spent several weeks in considering the "comprehensive" plan in all its aspects.⁶²

On the favorable report of this Committee, Admiralty contracts were awarded to the P. and O. Company for the regular operation of the two eastern lines, the service to begin on January 1, 1845.⁶³ By the terms of the agreement, the China mails were to be conveyed monthly in vessels of 400 horsepower or above to and from Ceylon, Penang, Singapore, and Hong Kong, connecting at Ceylon with the line between Calcutta and Suez, in consideration of the sum of £115,000 per annum. This contract was not put up to public bidding, as it was obvious that no other company was in a position to undertake the service, in the first place, and in the second, it would have been unjust to the Peninsular and Oriental Company after they had invested so much capital in new vessels for executing the service.⁶⁴

This arrangement gave India two mail communications with Europe per month. One was carried on by the steam packets of the East India Company between Suez, Aden, and Bombay, whence the mails, and, occasionally, travellers, were transported

⁶⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 371. In 1842 the total cost per annum of the monthly service between Suez and Bombay was about £110,000.

⁶¹ A strictly private enterprise, fostered by the Calcutta firm of Mackey & Co., had been put on foot in 1842 for a line between Calcutta and Singapore. With the maturing of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's eastern service, however, this seems to have fallen through. *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 200; *ibid.*, XL, N.S., Pt. II, 46. See *Parl. Pap.*, 1850, No. 693.

⁶² *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., II, 663-664.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3d Ser., III, 98-99, 322; *ibid.*, 3d Ser., IV, 539-540. The *Precursor*, which had lately been overhauled, was immediately sent out to Calcutta, followed soon afterward by the *Lady Mary Wood* (650 T., 250 H.P.), which was to carry the China mails until the arrival of more adequate vessels. Large steamers were at the same time put under construction in England for this purpose.

⁶⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 372. This contract awarded the Company about 12s. per mile for the China service, whereas for the Calcutta service payment was made at the rate of about 20s. per mile. It was estimated that the steam vessels belonging to the Admiralty could not have operated the China line with mails alone for less than 42s. 6d. per mile.

overland by *dâk* to the other presidencies and to the larger cities of the interior. The other was conducted by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, whose vessels, also touching at Aden, conveyed mails and passengers to Ceylon, Madras, and Calcutta, dropping Bombay and China mails at Ceylon, whence they were carried to their destinations by branch steamers.⁶⁵ It was evident from the first that this newly-inaugurated plan conferred great benefits, especially of a commercial nature, upon both England and India. Nevertheless, the operation of the scheme was in some respects unsatisfactory, chiefly because it was not unified. Lack of correlation in the sailings and time schedules of the vessels of the Indian Navy and of the Peninsular and Oriental Company produced frequent delays in the transmission of mails through Egypt and in their despatch from Alexandria.⁶⁶ But greater annoyances grew out of the complex arrangements for the transit of the mails on the European side.

According to the schedule adopted by the British Post Office, the mails destined for Bombay and interior Indian cities were despatched from Southampton and London on the third and seventh respectively of each month. The former section of the mail, conveyed by sea to Malta, met there the mail despatched from London on the seventh *via* Marseilles. From Malta both sections were conveyed to Alexandria in Admiralty packets, and from Suez to Bombay in vessels of the Indian Navy. The second Indian mail left Southampton on the twentieth of each month in P. and O. vessels and called at Malta for mails despatched from London on the twenty-fourth *via* Marseilles. From Malta the combined mail was carried to Alexandria and from Suez to Ceylon in P. and O. steamers, the Bombay and China mails being transferred at Ceylon, while the Madras and Calcutta mails continued in the same vessel. A similar schedule was arranged for the west-bound mails.⁶⁷ But this plan failed to function as intended. Mails destined for London and marked *via* Marseilles were frequently transported *via* Gibraltar instead of *vice versa*. Thus there were sometimes two London deliveries of the same eastern mail.⁶⁸ Moreover, as the P. and O. steamers were almost invariably on time, while those of the Admiralty and the East India Company seldom were, great confusion resulted.

To simplify the system and to iron out several of the wrinkles

⁶⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 19. See *ibid.*, 1852, No. 87, "Postal Communication in India."

⁶⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., III, 655.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3d Ser., IV, 207; Capt. James Barber, *The Overland Guide-Book . . .* (London, 1845), p. 9; W. H. Bartlett, *The Nile Boat*, pp. 11, 19.

⁶⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., IV, 95, 655.

in the existing plan, the Peninsular and Oriental Company in 1845 undertook to effect a substitution of their own vessels for those of the Admiralty on the line between Southampton and Alexandria *via* Malta in connection with a new line of steamships they were about to establish between England, Constantinople, and Black Sea ports, running a branch steamer from Malta to Alexandria to connect with the monthly sailings of steamers of the Indian Navy. This service they offered to perform at an annual cost of £10,000 less than that required by the Admiralty steamers. Such an arrangement was carried out for a time and with considerable improvement in the Mediterranean service. The Government, however, finding that it had no other employment for the steamers thus discontinued, terminated the plan and resumed sailings as before. This was strongly resented both in England and in India, particularly because of the fact that the Admiralty steamers carried neither goods, parcels nor passengers.⁶⁹ Such a condition could not long be tolerated, and within a few years more it gave place entirely to mail and passenger service by private carriers under Government contract.

Although much remained to be done in the way of systematizing and synchronizing the service, all of India was definitely connected with the home country by 1843 through the agency of steam communication. Calcutta and London had been brought within forty days of each other, the time between Bombay and London being some ten days less. In either case this was only about one-fourth of the time which had been required for the communication at the beginning of the century.⁷⁰

Within the next ten years the whole comprehensive plan was improved and extended, partly for the sake of better communication between England and the Indian Presidencies and China, and partly in connection with the development of new steam lines to the Australian colonies. By 1854 the China steamers sailed twice monthly from Bombay to Hong Kong, picking up the China mails brought out from Suez at Ceylon, and again stopping at Ceylon on the return voyage for the Bombay mails brought out monthly from England *via* Suez in the P. and O. steamers. The steamers

⁶⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. 373-375; *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., IV, 540.

⁷⁰ Anderson, *Communication with India, China, etc., via Egypt*, pp. 3-5; *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., I, 562, 567; Edward Clarkson, *The Suez Navigable Canal for Accelerated Communication with India* (London, 1843), p. 14. One of the results of the extension of eastern routes was the building of larger and more powerful steam vessels. In 1854 the Peninsular and Oriental Company added to their fleet the palatial *Himalaya*, of 3438 tons and 750 horsepower, the first screw steamer on the Indian line. This vessel was subsequently purchased by the British Government and used as a transport.

of the Indian Navy continued to operate the Bombay-Suez line monthly, but the service had become so unsatisfactory that the East India Company had at last concluded to relinquish the line to a private concern as soon as the necessary contracts could be awarded.⁷¹ The full working out of this passenger and mail service was somewhat interrupted by political events in Europe and in India in the years 1854 to 1858, but before the opening of the Crimean War a complete skeleton of steam lines of communication to the East had been constructed, only requiring improvements from time to time as mechanical evolution and enlarging needs demanded.

The working out of a complete system of communications with India awaited the establishment of regular steam service to China and Australia. The vigorous young British commonwealths which sprang up in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand after the cessation of convict transportation were not slow in recognizing the potentialities of the steamship. Although they were further removed from the mother country than the Anglo-Indians, they were also home lovers, and were more acutely conscious, possibly, of separation from friends and relatives than the more sophisticated English in India.

Until 1841 ships made their way to the Australian settlements only when there was a cargo of goods or a load of colonists to be taken out. Other passengers and mails, of course, had to wait on such casual sailings. Some approach to the matter of regular communication was made in 1841, however, when a line of sailing packets began making voyages at fairly regular intervals from the Clyde to the colony of New South Wales.⁷² This was followed by other lines of regular service of a similar kind, so that within a few more years the sailings to and from England and Australia by way of the Cape of Good Hope were about as adequate as that character of service could accomplish. Such communications were, nevertheless, quite unsatisfactory in two main particulars: first, the passage to and from Australia, a distance of approximately 15,000 miles, was very slow, requiring a voyage of four or five months; and in the second place, because of the time

⁷¹ [Lieut. Thomas Waghorn], *Letter to the Rt. Hon. Wm. Ewart Gladstone, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the Extension of Steam Navigation from Singapore to Port Jackson, Australia* (London, 1846), p. 22; Grindlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 20, *passim*. The firm of Grindlay & Co. had been formed by Melville Grindlay, formerly a member of the Bengal Steam Committee and a long staunch advocate of steam lines direct to Calcutta.

⁷² *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIV, N.S., Pt. II, 163. Mails for Australia were regularly despatched in sailing vessels under British Government contract after February, 1844. — *Ibid.*, 3d Ser., II, 212.

consumed and the quantities of food required for passengers, it was relatively expensive, single fare averaging from £75 to £100.⁷³ Obviously this could be improved only by the establishment of lines of large steam vessels.

The first step was taken toward improving the communication when about 1845 a group of Sydney steam enthusiasts formed a steam association, not unlike those organized in the Indian communities, for the purpose of raising funds for the formation of a steam company and for carrying on a campaign for government assistance. Already lines of small steam vessels were in operation for coastwise and river traffic in the colonies,⁷⁴ and the ready success of these small ventures, together with the opening up of the line between Bombay and Suez by the Indian Navy, gave impetus to the idea that the establishment of steam lines by one or another of the various possible routes between England and Australia would be practicable.⁷⁵

In spite of the enthusiasm in New South Wales for the projected steam navigation company, it was soon discovered that the problem was too large to be solved at the outset by private initiative. It was only when the Legislative Council of the colony petitioned the Home Government in 1845 "that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to extend to this colony the benefits of the arrangements under which mails are to be despatched by steam conveyance to India and China, on the same terms as other British colonies,"⁷⁶ that a promising beginning was made. Progress, however, was discouragingly slow. In 1846, 1848, and again in 1850, Select Committees appointed by the Legislative Council of New South Wales studied ways and means of improving communications,⁷⁷ but the Colonial Government found it impracticable to take any active steps in consequence.

The recommendations of the Committee of 1850, while not followed up at once, had considerable influence on the decisions

⁷³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 372, App. No. 11.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5; *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 24, 236; *ibid.*, XXXII, N.S., Pt. II, 234, 291; *ibid.*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 34. The *Sydney Gazette* said on 23 May, 1835: "The impetus which steam navigation gives to exertions in all parts of the colony to which it is directed has had its effects. . . Property . . . is daily increasing in value; new buildings are springing up, and the proprietors of inns find their account in the facility and expedition of communication." The first steamboat in the waters of New South Wales was put into service in 1831.

⁷⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 372, p. 4; *Asiatic Journal*, XXX, N.S., Pt. II, 44; Adam Bogue, *Steam to Australia, Its General Advantages Considered* . . . (Sydney, 1848).

⁷⁶ Waghorn, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 430, "Copies of the Reports of 1846, 1848, and 1850, of Committees of the Legislative Councils of New South Wales, New Zealand, and the Mauritius. . ."

of the Home Government later. This report took into consideration the advantages of all possible routes, and reported in favor of the so-called Torres Straits route, by way of Singapore, Ceylon, and Aden to Suez, and from Alexandria to England. The Cape route was considered to be primarily a commercial highway, one which could be as well served by sailing as by steam vessels. The route by way of the Isthmus of Panama was given serious consideration, as it promised some unique advantages. It was no longer than the others, and its proximity to the rich commercial marts of North and South America and the West Indies gave it considerable prestige. Moreover, the early completion of the Panama Railway was confidently anticipated.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the success of the Peninsular and Oriental Company in the East, and the agitation carried on by interested English groups gave promise of tangible accomplishment.⁷⁹ On March 27, 1851, the English House of Commons ordered "that a Committee be appointed to inquire into the existing Steam Communications with India and China, and into the Practicability of effecting any improvement therein; and also into the best mode of establishing Steam Communications between England, India, China, Australia, New Zealand, or any of them, as well as any Points upon the several routes between them."⁸⁰

This Committee of seventeen pursued its labors vigorously for more than four months. Almost at the outset of its work the fact became apparent that while two separate problems had been designated in the task assigned, the first, that of suggesting changes and improvements in the service to India and China, depended largely on the recommendations to be made regarding the second, which had to do with Australasian lines. The Committee therefore attacked the second problem first, handing in a first report on June fifth. This report was at once comprehensive and definitive. It reviewed the urgent need of the Australian communities for regular and rapid steam service; it outlined the character and the merits of each of the three great routes by which steam communication might be established, together with the steam companies prepared to develop each; it compared the merits of the new screw propeller with the new "feathering" paddle

⁷⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, Nos. 349, 430, 372. The computed distance between Plymouth and Sydney by way of Panama was 12,572 miles, requiring a voyage estimated at 64 days. By way of Singapore the mileage was calculated as 12,710, the time as 66 days, and by way of the Cape of Good Hope, 13,162 miles and 71 days.

⁷⁹ *Asiatic Journal* 3d Ser., III, 322; Waghorn, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 45; *Calcutta Review*, XIII, 200-220; *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 372, pp. 478-485; [R. M. Martin], *British Possessions in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australasia connected with England by the India and Australia Mail Steam Packet Company* . . . (London, 1847).

⁸⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 472, p. [ii].

wheel; it considered termini; and, finally, it referred to the subsidies necessary for putting its proposals into effect.⁸¹

The Committee found the direct route through Egypt to Point de Galle and thence *via* Singapore, Batavia, and Cape Leeuwin most advantageous from the point of view of postal communication. This was also the line adjudged most desirable for passenger traffic as far as expedition and economy were concerned, "although the tropical heats . . . together with the probability of crowded vessels . . . render it the least preferable, in point of comfort." The Cape line was selected as peculiarly adapted to the carriage of merchandise, and this also was found to be the only practicable route to Australia entirely under the control of Great Britain and free from liability of interruption. In view of these considerations, the Committee felt that it could make but one logical recommendation, which was "that the line proposed to be extended from the Cape of Good Hope to Sydney is the one which combines these advantages to the greatest extent, and at the smallest cost to the public."⁸² The Committee further believed that within a few years a steam communication between Australia and India by way of Singapore would be a natural result of the growth of Australian colonies.

This report of the Committee was not acted upon by the Government as the Cabinet did not sympathize with the emphasis laid on the Cape route.⁸³ Nevertheless, most of the features contained in its recommendations were worked out during the next few years. The General Screw Steam Company, which had already established a line to the Cape of Good Hope, placed in service a new class of vessels on the route to Australia by way of the Cape. Even the Panama route was developed for a time, in spite of the adverse report of the Committee. The Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company, which had been carrying mails to the West Indies and Mexico under contract for several years, tentatively began steam sailings from Panama to Australia. This line was later developed by the Australian Mail Steam Packet Company. Their service began in 1852, and by 1854 they had completed their preparations for operating a line monthly from Panama by way of New Zealand to Sydney and Melbourne.⁸⁴ These two lines to Australia provided facilities for the transportation of considerable quantities of the more valuable kinds of goods, and for some mails and passengers, although neither op-

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. iii-xi, 72.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. vii-xi, 72.

⁸³ *London Times*, 4 and 31 July, 1851.

⁸⁴ Grindlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 26, *passim*; *London Times*, 20 Nov., 1852.

erated under Government contract. Passenger traffic, however, was not heavy by either of these lines. Those who could not afford the heavy steamship fares, and the bulk of emigrants were among them, reached the Australasian settlements in the large and commodious sailing vessels operated by Messrs. Green, of Blackwall, Messrs. Smith, or Messrs. Wigram & Company.⁸⁵ These firms had developed magnificent lines of sailing vessels after the termination of the commercial monopoly of the East India Company, and had long been prominent in the Indian trade around the Cape of Good Hope. Travellers to the Far East to whom speed was more and money less of a factor, generally chose to go out by way of the overland route, which was not in the least prejudiced by the report of the Committee of 1851 in favor of the Cape route.

Having taken up the communication and transportation needs of the Australasian colonies, the Select Committee of 1851 next attacked the question of improving the service to India and China. This matter was taken up with particular reference to the postal service, yet commercial needs and passenger facilities were considered as well.⁸⁶ In substance, the Committee believed that although parts of India received postal service twice a month, all main parts of that country should receive fortnightly service. This was thought to be feasible without any increase in existing costs to the Government. It was recommended that the line between Aden and Bombay be left in the hands of the East India Company for "political reasons," and that a new postal line be established between Hong Kong and Shanghai.⁸⁷ There was more than a political reason for the former recommendation. Evidence taken by the Committee of 1851 indicated that between 1845 and 1850 the P. and O. Company had made few improvements in their equipment, and had conducted their eastern service in true monopolistic fashion.⁸⁸ With the focusing of public attention on these shortcomings, however, the Directors of the Company read a warning and introduced a number of improvements without delay.⁸⁹ Although the ships of the East India Company continued to operate the Bombay-Aden-Suez line, the

⁸⁵ Grindlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. [iii]. This report was handed in 29 July, 1851.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. vii-xi; *ibid.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, p. 148. The Secretary of the East India Company explained to a Parliamentary Committee in 1853 that "it has been thought desirable . . . that the flag of the Company, as the rulers of India, should be seen constantly in the Red Sea and in Egypt."

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, pp. 177-178; *ibid.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 19.

⁸⁹ One of the interesting controversies of the time sprang up around the respective merits of wooden and iron ships for constant steam service. Up to 1851, it had generally been assumed that wooden, especially teak, vessels, although

P. and O. began a service of their own on this line in 1853 with larger and faster vessels than those of the Indian Navy.⁹⁰ This competition, together with a series of political difficulties in the East, which badly disrupted the Naval steam service, eventually led to the retirement of the East India Company and to the bringing of this pioneer line into the P. and O. system.

The scheme of fortnightly mails to all parts of India and to Singapore and Hong Kong, recommended in 1851, was inaugurated early in 1852. The contracts for this service also called for mail trips between Singapore and Sydney in every alternate month, a service which was extended to New Zealand a little later on.⁹¹ This extended communication, which embraced practically all of the points contemplated by those who had originally advocated a comprehensive plan, was organized in several separate sections with several branches. Between England and Alexandria was a fortnightly communication by way of Malta and Gibraltar, with a branch from Marseilles to Malta. Another fortnightly line ran from Suez to Hong Kong *via* Aden, Point de Galle (Ceylon), Madras, and Calcutta. From Bombay and Point de Galle a line continued by way of Penang and Singapore to Hong Kong. A branch steamer connected Hong Kong with Shanghai, and a branch line from Singapore *via* Batavia, Swan River, Adelaide, and Port Phillip to Sydney was operated in alternate months.⁹² The Indian Navy supplemented the P. and O. system by monthly voyages from Bombay to Suez and fortnightly service from Bombay to Aden to connect with alternate P. and O. sailings.⁹³

An entire fleet of steamships was required for the working out of this comprehensive plan. That of the Peninsular and Oriental Company alone numbered about twenty-five by 1854, the majority of which were kept in constant service. These vessels ranged in size from small service steamers employed on short branch lines, such as those which were employed on the Nile, to the new

heavier, were superior as naval vessels, of longer life, and even faster than those of iron. Even the Peninsular and Oriental Company did not deny these advantages of wooden vessels when, in 1850 and again in 1851, they were informed by the British Admiralty that "no vessel commenced after the date of this letter will be approved of, under the terms of the contract, if built of iron or of any material offering so ineffectual a resistance to the striking of shot." (*Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 86, pp. 1-3. See *ibid.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, p. 173.) The Select Committee of 1851 reported in favor of iron vessels on all points, and within a few years the ban of the Admiralty on such ships was removed.

⁹⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1852-1853, No. 627, pp. 158-159.

⁹¹ *London Times*, 27 Feb., 4 and 6 March, 1852.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 8 March, 1852.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 29 Sept., 1852.

leviathans of those days, of 1200 to 2000 tons burden and 500 to 650 horsepower.⁹⁴ By 1854 the Peninsular and Oriental Company were able to put into commission a new screw steam vessel, *Assaye*, of 3500 tons and 750 horsepower, the largest steamer afloat for the time being. Within a decade speed also had materially increased. Eight or nine knots per hour had been considered fast service in the early forties. By the outbreak of the Crimean War, average speeds of eleven or twelve knots were maintained over the longest sections of the eastern lines.⁹⁵ Thirteen or fourteen knots were not unusual on short runs, and the southwest monsoon had definitely lost its power to terrify the navigator. Bombay and London had at last been brought within a month of each other for the express traveller — a noteworthy accomplishment.⁹⁶

In addition to the numerous vessels of the P. and O. establishment, those of the Indian Navy were only less powerful and superbly equipped. The ships built to replace and supplement those with which the line was opened between Bombay and Suez, while constructed with a view to their utility in time of war, were no longer the cramped, comfortless warships of the late thirties. As their size and power had increased, accommodations for passengers had likewise. By 1854 such ships as the *Assaye*, of 1800 tons and 650 horsepower, and *Punjaub*, 1800 tons and 700 horsepower, compared very favorably with the palatial steamers of the P. and O. in eastern waters.⁹⁷ Moreover, since the Indian Navy had been placed on a steam basis and employed largely in regular passenger and mail service on the Bombay-Suez line, a new generation of naval officers had grown up who were not steeped in the traditions of the old Navy, and to whom there was no disgrace in commanding vessels engaged in work of a commercial nature.⁹⁸ The lapse of the commercial activities of the Indian Navy was due more to the exigencies of a new series of naval operations, perhaps, than to the competition of the P. and O. concern.

The European end of the comprehensive scheme of communi-

⁹⁴ Grindlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7; Messrs. Waghorn & Co.'s *Overland Guide to India by Three Routes to Egypt* . . . (2d ed., London 1846), p. 7; David L. Richardson, *The Anglo-Indian Passage; Homeward and Outward: or A Card for the Overland Traveller from Southampton to Bombay, Madras and Calcutta* (London, 1849), p. 9; *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. 420, 427, *passim*.

⁹⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. 335-338, 383-387.

⁹⁶ In 1845 Lieut. Thomas Waghorn carried despatches from Alexandria to London which had consumed a total time of twenty-nine and a half days from Bombay. Waghorn thought that the time could readily be reduced to twenty-five days, using the route from Trieste through Germany to the English Channel. — *Illustrated London News*, 8 Nov., 1845, p. 292.

⁹⁷ Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, II, 583.

⁹⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. xvii, xviii, 104-107, 298-304, 332-335.

cations was not wholly in the hands of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. Vessels of the British Admiralty had ceased to maintain a separate service in the Mediterranean, but their place had been taken by a swarm of fast, up-to-date steam packets of French and Austrian lines. The French packets operating from Marseilles to ports of the eastern Mediterranean at very frequent intervals were still reputed, as they were earlier, to be faster and more efficient than competing English vessels. In 1847 the French had about forty Post Office packets operating in the Mediterranean, with service between Marseilles and Alexandria three times a month.⁹⁹ After 1845, however, the Austrian Lloyds Company, with lines throughout the eastern Mediterranean, caused the greatest anxiety. This concern, founded in 1836 with an equipment of seven small vessels, had in 1847 twenty-five large steamers. Weekly voyages were made all through the East and many British passengers to and from the Orient patronized this Mediterranean service in spite of attempts by the P. and O. to discourage such traffic by a high-handed rate discrimination. Sailings of British steamers to many parts of Italy, Greece, the Ionian Islands, and Syria had almost entirely ceased as French and Austrian vessels captured the local trade of these countries, and the idea of a British route to India through Mesopotamia lapsed for a time. It was reported in 1851 that the Austrian Lloyds were even contemplating an arrangement with American and Dutch steamship interests for the development of their own comprehensive scheme of communication and transportation in Asiatic waters.¹⁰⁰

This situation gave rise to grave apprehensions in the minds of good imperialists.

Our Indian Empire is now governed by orders transmitted through Egypt [said one of them]. It is not very statesmanlike to trust to the possibility of sending couriers by way of the Euphrates and by Persia, when the couriers by the Euphrates must take their passage in a French steamer to Beyrout, and those through Persia in an Austrian to Trebizond. . . Should Great Britain be engaged in war with any European power . . . there can be no doubt that every at-

⁹⁹ *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, pp. 18, 19; *British Possessions in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australasia connected with England by the India and Australia Mail Steam Packet Company* . . . p. 7; *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. 259-265; *ibid.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 22; *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, pp. 4, 5; *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., IV, 651.

tempt would be made by our enemies to interrupt our communications with India through Egypt. All Europe regards this interruption as one of the severest wounds that the enemies of England can inflict on her power. . . . A rapid means of communicating between India and Malta, both by means of the Red Sea and of the Persian Gulf, through Egypt and through Syria, would multiply 10-fold the resources of Britain, and secure the defences of our possessions from Canada to Hong Kong. . . .¹⁰¹

Such warnings as this, however, were unheeded until the issues of a great mid-century European war, in which England was pitted against one of her rivals for hegemony in the Orient, brought public attention in England to focus on the political advantages of having more than one route of access to the Indian Empire.

In the rapid development of communication by the overland route, the railway had coöperated with the steam vessel. The opening of the Eastern Counties Railway from London to Dover and the Southwestern Railway from London to Southampton, supplanting the express coach by uniformly rapid and dependable service, subtracted hours from the time consumed in a distant journey and added infinitely to the comfort and convenience of travellers.¹⁰² For those who pursued the overland route through France,¹⁰³ the completion of railway lines between Calais and Paris and Marseilles were noteworthy achievements. By the middle of the century the most difficult link in the whole comprehensive chain, for mails, passengers and goods, was the passage through Egypt. Although this had been vastly improved since the opening of the overland route, its development had not kept pace with mechanical evolution elsewhere. But projects were already well under way to remove the obstructing features of this land link, by the completion of a railway between Alexandria and Suez, or by the digging of a navigable canal through the land

¹⁰¹ *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, p. 3. See *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 349, p. 22.

¹⁰² *Gallery of Illustration*, p. 9. C. W. Whitaker, in his *History of Enfield* (London, 1911, p. 38), speaks of a coach, displaced by the opening of the Eastern Counties Railway, being bought by Thomas Waghorn for use in Egypt.

¹⁰³ The term "overland," as has already been pointed out, originally referred to the land passage through Egypt. By 1850 it had come to be applied customarily to the passage by one of several possible routes across the continent from the English Channel to some port on the Mediterranean. It was no longer needed to designate the Egyptian passage, since, for purposes of communication, there was but one main highway to the East.

barrier. Thus might the overland route suffice for trade as well as for purposes of communication.¹⁰⁴ In 1820 it not infrequently required two months to make a voyage from London to Constantinople. A generation later Calcutta had been brought within half of that time-distance, and even Sydney, in the very heart of the antipodes, could be reached within the space of two months. Such rapid changes placed some strain on the imagination for a time, but by the middle of the nineteenth century the mind could grasp a trip from London to Lahore or from Southampton to Sydney as readily as from London one could envisage Constantinople, Beirut, or Alexandria a little earlier.

Steam navigation [said a contemporary], mighty as its progress has been during the last ten years, is yet in its infancy. In the perfection of machinery; in the diminution of the expense of locomotive power; and in prevention of accidents, there is much scope for improvements which science, acting upon experience, will in time accomplish. . . . There is no limit to the effects of steam power, which will work more changes in society than either the [magnetic] needle, gunpowder, or the art of printing.¹⁰⁵

Such an enthusiastic statement was hardly overdrawn, when it is considered that nearly 100,000 letters were sent in each overland mail, and nearly 2000 passengers made their way to and from India in 1843, in comparison with only 275 in 1839,¹⁰⁶ and when steam vessels had grown within a decade from pygmies of 500 tons or less to relatively huge steamships of 1800 tons.

Still more significant than mere growth of mails and increase in travel, more potent than increased tonnage and more frequent sailings, was the series of social changes in India inaugurated by rapid steam communication. No hint of the profound influence on native Indian life and thought which was to come from European ideas and methods was discernible in 1843. Yet already the first pages were being written in the drama of which the first act was the great Revolt of 1857, the second was the rise of *swaraj* and *swadeshi* later in the century, while the third was written in terms of the late wide-spread program of passive resistance. European influences and institutions, producing unhealthy and dangerous reactions upon coming in contact with orientalism, would hardly have found their way to India to any extensive degree but for the steamship and new steam routes.

¹⁰⁴ *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, pp. 16, 17.

¹⁰⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., I, 567.

¹⁰⁶ F.O. 97/408, Report of C. A. Murray to Lord Palmerston, 6 June, 1847.

the Euphrates River. In political circles this was considered to be a means of keeping in touch with developments in that part of western Asia with which Britain was most concerned and equivalent to serving notice upon the Tsar and upon Mehemet Ali, that along the natural lines to India British interests were to be maintained regardless of the late events. It mattered little to the British Government under whose control lay the highway to India as long as that highway was always open and safe. It was to be presumed that the occupation of Syria and Mesopotamia by Mehemet Ali would not in itself constitute a danger, but in view of the traditional friendship for Turkey and the degree of French influence with the Pasha, British feeling was, as stated by Lord Palmerston, that "Turkey is as good an occupier of the road to India as an active Arab sovereign would be."⁶ At the same time it was Palmerston's opinion that "the mistress of India cannot permit France to be mistress directly or indirectly of the road to her Indian dominions,"⁷ which was equivalent to stating a British doctrine of paramount interest in those portions of the Near East through which ran the natural routes to the East.⁸

For more than four years after the signing of the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi the European political situation underwent no fundamental change, but enough incidents occurred to keep all of the Powers on the *qui vive*. Interest continued to focus on the route to India whenever Egyptian troops and Russian, Turkish, and French intrigues combined to foment difficulties of any sort. During this period Mehemet Ali was busily engaged in making real a nominal control over his new Syrian territories and Arabia. His object was apparently to solidify the conquests already made so that when the times were propitious his advance on Constantinople might be resumed with every chance of success.

⁶ Sir Henry Lytton E. Bulwer, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston* (3 vols., London, 1870-1874), II, 145.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 293.

⁸ F. S. Rodkey states, however (*op. cit.*, p. 10), that "Her [England's] interests in the Near East had never been paramount. It was before the day when oil counted for much in the diplomatic affairs of nations, and the commercial route to India was still by way of the Cape of Good Hope." While it is true that for most kinds of goods the Cape route was not supplanted until after the opening of the Suez Canal, it is equally true that the shorter routes of communication not only influenced, but very largely determined, British policy in the Near East after 1830, and, as these routes also offered possible avenues of invasion to rival powers, their guarding was one of the major considerations in British foreign policy. No other view will explain the extent of British participation in the Syrian crisis in 1839-1840, various campaigns in Persia, the Crimean War, opposition to the French Suez Canal Company, and the occupation of Egypt. A few new factors entered into the campaigns in Mesopotamia during the Great War, but the fundamental issues were much the same as formerly. See Victor Fontanier, *Voyage dans l'Inde par l'Égypte et la Mer Rouge*, I, 289.

The withdrawal of some of the Egyptian forces from Asia Minor in 1833 made possible the fitting out of an expedition for reduction of the several semi-independent tribes of Arabia. In 1834 an Egyptian army of a few thousand well-trained troops proceeded in leisurely fashion through Arabia to the head of the Persian Gulf, receiving the submission of intervening peoples and levying tribute.⁹ At the mouth of the Shaat-el-Arab, the Egyptian army established contact with an Egyptian fleet, which had been sent around from the Red Sea. For a short time the island of Bahrein, which occupies a strategic position in the Arabian Gulf, was occupied, but it was presently evacuated because of British protests.¹⁰ British forces themselves took possession of the island in 1839 and maintained the place as a base of operations.¹¹ Further Egyptian exploits in lower Mesopotamia were obstructed by the watchfulness of the Indian Navy. In view of British attitude, Mehemet Ali fell back on his customary policy of making haste slowly, and while his forces remained in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea until 1840, their operations were confined chiefly to overawing the Arab tribes of the interior.¹² By 1839 Egyptian forces had brought practically all of Arabia under control. The ports on the east shore of the Red Sea, including the important trading centers of Mocha and Jedda, had been occupied, and the presence of Egyptian forces in the vicinity of Aden undoubtedly exerted strong influence on the decision of British authorities to seize and garrison the place.¹³

It is not strange that during this period British policy with regard to Egypt was founded on the assumption that a ruler who was considered a protégé by the French Government and whose administration contained so many French officials could not have friendly sentiments for Britain and was not to be trusted. A brilliant French officer, Colonel Sèves, better known as Suleiman

⁹ D. G. Hogarth, *The Penetration of Arabia*, pp. 84-87, 104, *passim*; Ainsworth, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, II, 198. It was feared for a time that Egyptian armies might march up the Tigris and undertake the conquest of Bagdad, and the Turkish Government urged the British to assist in preventing such a step. The Pasha refrained from threatening the city, however.

¹⁰ Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 360-361.

¹¹ Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, VII, 35-40.

¹² Victor Fontanier states that at his suggestion Egyptian forces captured and plundered the Persian town of Mohammerah because Col. Chesney, in the name of his Government, had taken its sheik under British protection. — Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 308, 361-378.

¹³ H. E. Egerton, *British Foreign Policy in Europe* (London, 1918), p. 189; *Parl. Pap.*, 1840, No. 277, p. 191; *ibid.*, 1841, No. [323.], Pt. II, 299, 300. Estimates of the size of the Pasha's army vary from 2500 to 10,000 men. The numbers had undoubtedly been considerably reduced by 1839.

sions against the Arabs. His purposes were so obvious and so intimately connected with the peace of Europe that early in 1838 Lord Palmerston instructed the British Consul-General in Egypt, Col. Patrick Campbell, to warn Mehemet Ali against attacking Turkish territory and to ask for an explanation of his extensive military preparations.²⁴

The Pasha stated in formal reply that he had not the remotest intention of conquering any of the Sultan's territory. Nevertheless, Col. Campbell felt impelled again to report to his Government, as he had previously, that he was convinced from private conversations with the Pasha that he was intending presently to assert his independence and to maintain it by force, if necessary. Palmerston instructed that the Pasha be warned again of the danger of taking any aggressive step against Turkey, stating at the same time that Great Britain would necessarily be drawn into the matter should any such act occur. However, Mehemet Ali persisted both in his plans for declaring himself independent and in strengthening his army and navy, believing, no doubt, that with the support of France and the influence on Great Britain of the Indian route, which had lately been opened up through Egypt, he would be secure from Egyptian intervention in the event of hostilities.²⁵ Not long afterward the Sultan, unable to tolerate longer the treasonable preparations of his vassal, threw down the gauntlet and brought all of Europe to the verge of war.

The Egyptian situation was linked up with other and somewhat similar problems farther east. In those countries forming a corridor from the Mediterranean to the confines of India, political conditions were little more satisfactory to British interests during the thirties than were those in Egypt. In this sphere Russian and not French aggression was the source of concern and this was not a small factor in the working out of the Egyptian question. During these years there could be little doubt of the existence of Russian intrigues all along the corridor to India. As Palmerston put it, soon after the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi:

With Russia we are just as we were, snarling at each other, hating each other, but neither wishing for war. Their last communication on Eastern affairs is anything but satisfactory. However, there is nothing at present done by us, because there is no danger of anything being done by them. They cannot return to Turkey unless invited by the Sultan, and the Sultan will not invite them unless he is again at-

²⁴ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXVI, 694.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 695-704; Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240.

tacked by Mehemet Ali; but Mehemet Ali will not stir as long as we beg him not to do so, because he knows that our fleet could effectually prevent him. . . . Our policy as to the Levant is to remain quiet, but remain prepared. . . .²⁶

But this note also indicates why, in spite of a uniformly hostile feeling in England toward everything Russian,²⁷ Anglo-Russian relations tended to improve, while those with France became increasingly unsatisfactory. Turkey was again returning to the British fold. The French, in consequence, could not be forgiven for their entrenched position athwart the overland route, while the greater arrogance of the Russians in the Middle East failed to check the constantly improving relations between the British and Russian Governments after 1834.

Even in outline, the charges which might have been preferred against Russia look serious. The Tsar's Government protested strongly to the Porte against the *firman* issued for the Euphrates Expedition in 1834.²⁸ Russian agents, many of them in disguise, were scattered throughout the countries of western Asia, and not infrequently were detected in India itself.²⁹ Twice during the decade from 1830 to 1840 Russian dealings with Persia almost led to a rupture of Anglo-Russian relations.

The first of these occurred in 1833 at the time of Russian moves on Turkey, when British officers and equipment reënforced the Persian armies in the field, where hostilities with the Russians were taking place spasmodically.³⁰ Shortly afterward Russian agents, filtering into Persia, weaned that state away from the British, proposing joint operations against the states bordering India. Henry Ellis, the British representative in Persia, reported to Lord Palmerston in 1835 that "The Shah has very extended

²⁶ Bulwer, *op. cit.*, II, 182-183; Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 220. From this it becomes apparent that one of the greatest agencies for peace was the British fleet. England was not without a war group, however. An able article in the *British and Foreign Review* concluded with the statements that "To England, a war opens up positive advantages, independent of the object," and that Russia could succeed in Turkey "only by preventing any collision from taking place." Quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 480-482.

²⁷ David Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources* . . . (London, 1833); *Le Sultan et le Pacha d'Égypte* (London, 1839), two pamphlets by the famous polemical writer; Anon., *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East* (London, 1836); *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, N.S., Pt. I, 85.

²⁸ Martens, *Recueil des Traités*, N.S., III, 760-762.

²⁹ Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 290-291; II, 75.

³⁰ P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, II, 428, *passim*; Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 346, II, 199, 200. Fontanier believed that the English were largely responsible for the troubles in this theatre. Their intrigues, he said, "had a character of avowed hostility to Russia, and leave a long way behind the manœuvres of which they reproach that power."

schemes of conquest in the direction of Afghanistan, and . . . conceives that the right of sovereignty over Herat and Khandahar is . . . complete. . . . This pretension is much sustained by the suggestions of Col. Borowski."³¹ And in November, 1836, the Government of India sent a despatch to John McNeill, newly accredited to the Persian Court, stating that —

The political interests of Great Britain and of British India are even more concerned than their commercial interests in the exemption of the countries between India and Persia from foreign aggression from the westward. The lately contemplated expedition against Herat, if it was not prompted, was, as is well known, strenuously urged on the attention of the Persian Government by the Russian Ambassador, and the pertinacity with which the Persian Government has persisted in this design, in spite of the remonstrances of His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador . . . is of itself a sufficient ground for apprehending the existence of some ulterior and unfriendly design towards our interests.³²

McNeill, who had been sent to Persia to counteract anti-British influences, was able to accomplish little. He managed to secure a *firman* from the Shah, giving English merchants such commercial privileges as had previously been accorded to Russia; and the Euphrates Expedition was thus enabled to operate in Persian territory along the Karun and lower Tigris Rivers.³³ But he was not able to dissuade Mohamed Shah from undertaking a siege of Herat, in which a Russian force was expected to co-operate. Here, after giving final notice that Great Britain could not remain an idle spectator in the projected hostilities, McNeill broke off diplomatic relations. It was only by the timely aid furnished by British Indian officers that the Persian attack was foiled.³⁴

The breach with Persia was healed almost as quickly as it was created. In May, 1838, while the siege of Herat was still in progress, the Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, reached the conclusion that a naval demonstration against the Persian coast might produce a salutary effect on the attitude of the Persian

³¹ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXIII, 864. See the pamphlet by E. Stirling, *On the Political State of the Countries between Persia and India* (London, 1835).

³² *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXV, 1247, 1253.

³³ *Ibid.*, XXIV, 769. McNeill became conspicuous years later in connection with a projected Euphrates Valley Railway.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, XXIV, 1289; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 276; Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, II, 98.

Government as it had on other occasions. Accordingly he gave instructions that the Bombay Government prepare a portion of the Indian Navy for such an expedition "at the earliest practicable period."⁸⁵ The naval squadron prepared for this service, led by the new steam frigate *Semiramis*, which had just come out from England, left Bombay early in June. The expedition proceeded to the mouth of the Persian Gulf, touched at Mascat and Bushire, and concentrated on the island of Karrack, where troops and stores were landed and the island temporarily taken over. Since this position dominated the town of Bushire, the most important Persian seaport, it was hoped that this "demonstration" would succeed without the necessity of bombarding the port or undertaking a land campaign.⁸⁶

The expedition succeeded in its immediate object. Being unable to seize Herat and doubtful of his Russian allies, the Shah trembled at the prospect of losing his principal seaport, and adopted a conciliatory tone. On August 14, he sent a despatch to the Indian Government consenting to all British demands. He added, "Were it not for the sake of the friendship of the British Government, we should not return from before Herat. Had we known that our coming here might risk the loss of their friendship, we certainly would not have come at all."⁸⁷ Early in September the siege of Herat was lifted, the Persian forces retired, and normal relations were presently established with British influence again predominant.⁸⁸

The return of Persia to the British fold did not entirely remove the Russian menace from India. As long as the Afghans in Herat held out, British India appeared safe: the passes were secure. But unexpectedly, before the Persians had withdrawn from Afghan territory, the Amir, Dost Mohammed, came to terms with the Russians, and formed an alliance whereby Russia was to assume protection over this frontier state. The news of this development created a great deal of excitement in the presidencies and caused no little unrest among the native Indian states, where Russian

⁸⁵ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 98.

⁸⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, XXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 275-276. The British Resident at Bushire had been insulted and forced to leave in March.

⁸⁷ Low, *op. cit.*, II, 99; *Parliamentary Paper*, 1839, No. [171.], "Correspondence Relating to Persia and Afghanistan."

⁸⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1842, No. [354.], p. 125. Whether the Indian Government had intended to retain Karrack as a permanent base is not known, though there are indications of such a plan. The place proved to be so pestiferous, however, that the troops were withdrawn as quickly as possible after the demonstration had served its purpose. Hardly a soldier was fit for duty at one time. — *Asiatic Journal*, XXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 213; *ibid.*, XXXIII, N.S., Pt. II, 210; *ibid.*, XXXVII, N.S., Pt. II, 46, 216; *ibid.* XXXIX N.S., Pt. II, 288; *ibid.*, XL, N.S., Pt. II, 45.

agents had already sowed the seeds of revolt.³⁹ The outlook was very dark, indeed. How great the Russian peril really was has never been determined.⁴⁰ British army officers who had made their way through Afghanistan as far as the frontiers of Russia a few years earlier insisted that it was highly improbable that a Russian army could have successfully invaded India because of the difficulty of depending on such a long line of communications.⁴¹ However, in India the danger appeared real and imminent, and steps were immediately taken by the Government of India to meet it. Early in 1839 an Indian army invaded Afghanistan, took the principal towns, Khandahar and Kabul, and occupied the country until the danger from Russia had subsided. Into the unfortunate *dénouement* we can not enter.

The campaign was not without its naval phase. The port of Kurrachee, in Baluchistan, had been surveyed as a possible point of vantage in the previous year. In February, 1839, a squadron of vessels of the Indian Navy attacked the place as a feudatory possession of the Afghan state. The protecting fort and the town were taken and occupied with ease, and Britain thus came into possession of the second best harbor in India. Because of the great strategic and commercial value of the port, it was retained at the close of the campaign as one of the most important outposts of the northwest frontier.⁴²

While the outcome of the international situation in the Middle East was still in doubt, the situation in the Levant resolved itself into an active crisis. When Mehemet Ali announced early in 1838 that he was determined to declare his independence and establish his own dynasty in Egypt and Syria, the Sultan, Mahmud, who had thus far relied on the attitude of the Great Powers to

³⁹ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 423; *Parl. Pap.*, 1839, No. [171.], pp. 176-205. The Russian Government at the same time formally stated that they harbored no designs on India.

⁴⁰ Curzon, *op. cit.*, II, 606. Lord Curzon is inclined to think the real danger from Russia was much exaggerated.

⁴¹ Lieut. Arthur Conolly, *Journey to the North of India, Overland from England, through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan* (2 vols., London, 1834); Lieut. A. Burnes, *Travels into the Bokhara, being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia* (3 vols. London, 1834); *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, IV, 278-317; *ibid.*, V, 297-305; Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 410-429. See H. C. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, pp. 139 ff.

⁴² Low, *op. cit.*, II, 100-104; Alexander F. Baillie, *Kurrachee (Karachi); Past, Present, and Future* (Calcutta, etc., 1890), pp. 27-31. Kurrachee proved to be a worthy rival of Bombay not many years later, and since 1839 has been looked upon as a very essential link in the chain of communications binding India with England, because of the location of the city both with reference to possible railway and air lines crossing Asia and to the Suez Canal.

prevent his domains from being further disrupted, determined to employ his own resources, if necessary, to prevent the consummation of the designs of his vassal. He encouraged the war party at Constantinople, raised new levies of troops, and sent extensive reënforcements into Asia Minor.

The Great Powers were slow to read in these preparations any serious intention on the part of the Turks. Nevertheless, when it became apparent that Mahmud meant to challenge Mehemet Ali, whether supported by the Powers or not, considerable diplomatic activity was inspired. Russia was especially anxious to prevent hostilities, fearing that in case Russian troops again made their appearance in Turkish territory to bolster up the Sultan, a break with England and France could not be averted.⁴³ For similar reasons the other Powers employed their good offices both with the Sultan and with the Viceroy of Egypt to prevent further war-like preparations. The Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi was, to Britain and France, a powerful deterrent.

In 1839, the whole Eastern Question, which had previously been realized but scarcely defined, resolved itself clearly in so far as the interests of the Powers in the Turkish Empire were concerned. Obviously, in making any settlement of the Eastern Question, the difficulty lay in securing the adhesion of both Russia and France to any general arrangement. British interests could be made to agree with the one or with the other, but hardly with both.

The geographical position of Russia demanded the recognition of her interests, if not her hegemony, in the outlet from the Black to the Mediterranean Sea.⁴⁴ To permit either Britain or France to dictate Turkish policies would defeat that aim. France, on the other hand, having sentimental interests in Syria and commercial ones in Egypt, felt impelled to assert herself as the natural protector of an Egyptian prince who would safeguard those interests. Her cue was to prevent either Russian or British dominance at Constantinople and to encourage the claims of the Viceroy of Egypt for independence. As Constantinople was the goal of Russia, Alexandria was the focus of French aims. British interests were seriously involved at both points. It was equally important to prevent Russian dominance at Constantinople and French control at Alexandria. A war between the Sultan and the Viceroy might easily bring Russian forces again into Stamboul in accordance with the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi. The Turks thus reënforced might then drive back Egyptian armies and re-

⁴³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1841, No. [322.], Pt. I, 5-9.

⁴⁴ See Rodkey, *op. cit.*, pp. 75 ff.

cover Syria, but in that case Russia would probably remain entrenched at the narrow straits and have in her keeping the route to India through Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf. This was an eventuality which the British could not afford to risk. If the French succeeded in confirming the hold of Mehemet Ali on Syria, they would, in consequence, dominate *both* of the natural routes to India, which was unthinkable.⁴⁵ Austria and Prussia, having no vital interests in the Levant, were, nevertheless, vitally concerned with perpetuating the European concert. Their influence, therefore, was placed in support of the program which promised most to keep the peace and solve the Eastern Question.

In April, 1839, the Sultan, believing his armies prepared for battle, refused to heed the restraining counsels of the ambassadorial group at Constantinople and ordered his forces into action against those of Mehemet Ali. The Turkish Army moved into territory occupied by the Egyptian forces on April 21, and offered to give battle. The latter, however, while anxious to try conclusions with their enemies, were held back by the Viceroy, pending further negotiations with representatives of the Powers. Hoping to enlist the support of the arbiters of European affairs by a show of moderation, he offered to withdraw his troops from a part of the contested area if the Turks would do likewise, and stated that if he were granted Egypt and the major portion of the occupied territory in hereditary possession, he would give definite guarantees for a beneficial administration.⁴⁶ United action by the Powers at Constantinople at this juncture might have brought an agreement and a suspension of hostilities. But while the French Ambassador, Admiral Roussin, urged the Porte to put a stop to the advance, the British Ambassador, Lord Ponsonby, who was personally hostile to the whole program of Mehemet Ali, encouraged the campaign already begun. The upshot of it was, therefore, that although Ibrahim Pasha had been instructed to avoid a clash with Turkish troops as long as possible, he was unable to do so without actually effecting a retreat. A decisive engagement took place on June 21, in which the Turkish army was routed and completely demoralized. Ibrahim Pasha, fully aroused by frequent Turkish raids and the opportunity presented by the victory, was intent on following up his success, when he was checked by the arrival of new orders from Egypt to take every precaution to avoid coming to blows.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1840, No. 277, "Report on Egypt and Candia," p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1841, No. [322.], Pt. I, 21-23, *passim*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-146; Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-242.

Meanwhile, the French and British Governments, anxious to preserve their nominal alliance and desirous of effecting an arrangement which would adjust the Syrian tangle, had been temporizing.⁴⁸ Each hoped to secure coöperation with the other on its own terms. Palmerston, conscious of the fact that he held the whip hand, and confident that none of the Powers would consider the issue as one which could seriously disrupt European relations, spoke as one on whom the burden of settlement primarily rested. The French not only resented his tacit assumption that the problem was one chiefly affecting British interests, but expected, by playing off the danger to be anticipated from Russia, to effect a settlement on their own terms. The result was that the two Powers rapidly drifted apart. By relying solely on a threadbare alliance, the alliance itself was put in jeopardy.⁴⁹ The Russian Government, meanwhile, anxious to destroy the Anglo-French pact, employed tact and concessions at the proper moment to attain the desired result. The Tsar issued formal statements that the movements of his forces in Persia and the Middle East indicated not the slightest designs on India, and at the same time, through his representative at the Court of St. James, signified his readiness to adhere to a settlement of the Eastern Question on British terms. Austria and Prussia, acting as usual in concert, and concerned more with an early settlement of a dangerous question than with the minor details of such a settlement, were willing to support either France or Russia in conjunction with Great Britain.

The Egyptian victory of June, 1839, considerably complicated matters. In the first place, it made any compromise between the Sultan and his vassal exceedingly difficult. In the second place, it greatly strengthened the French demands that Mehemet Ali be confirmed in hereditary possession of his conquests, a point to which the English Cabinet could hardly agree, while Russia's refusal to take advantage of the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi and her willingness to leave to the British the physical protection of the Turkish cause reënforced the position held by the English Foreign Secretary. The point of common agreement among the Powers was that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire should be preserved and that Mehemet Ali should receive some formal recognition. The issue hinged largely on the disposition of Syria.

The French believed that by persuading Mehemet Ali to adopt a pacific policy in Syria and to modify his original demands they were gradually leading the way to a settlement.⁵⁰ In this

⁴⁸ *Annual Register*, 1841, pp. 5-16.

⁴⁹ Rodkey, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124; Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 252 ff.

⁵⁰ Rodkey, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128.

belief they were rudely disillusioned, however, when on July 15, 1840, the representatives of the four Powers, Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia, signed a Convention for the Pacification of the Levant without reference to and without the knowledge of France. Russia, by abandoning the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, had won a diplomatic victory. France was isolated and the Anglo-French alliance was destroyed.

According to the terms of the new Convention, the Sultan promised —

To grant to Mehemet Ali, for himself and for his descendants in the direct line, the administration of the Pashalik of Egypt; and . . . to grant to Mehemet Ali for his life, with the title of Pasha of Acre, and with the command of the fortress of St. Jean d'Acre, the administration of the southern part of Syria. . .⁵¹

The offer was conditioned, however, by provisions that Mehemet Ali was to make complete submission and to accept the Convention within a few days to make it effective in all its parts. Among themselves the Powers thought to solve a difficult question by writing into the Convention that the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were to be at all times closed to vessels of war. Thus, a settlement had been provided, although it did not represent the whole of the Concert of Europe, and lacking the signature of France its value was somewhat problematical.⁵² It was also doubtful whether the Pasha would peacefully acquiesce in the conditions, as he had not been consulted with regard to them, nor had his case been represented by a friendly Power.

A few days after the Convention had been signed, Lord Palmerston made known its contents to Guizot, then French Ambassador in London. Guizot's feelings of pique and chagrin, however, were hardly a symptom of the storm of rage and disapproval which burst from the French capital upon receipt of the news from London. Not only the Foreign Minister, Thiers, and the French Cabinet, but the whole of the French nation, recovering from the momentary shock of discovering that England had deserted the French alliance for one with Russia, burst into a paroxysm of hate and denunciation of "*perfidé Albion*."⁵³ By way of giving vent to wounded pride, the Government immediately took steps, hurried on by the popular war clamor, to place France

⁵¹ Sir E. Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, II, 1005.

⁵² *The Camb. Hist. Journ.*, I, 172.

⁵³ *Annual Register*, 1840, p. [172].

in a high state of defence and to bring the army and navy to full war strength. Several members of the British Cabinet were convinced that France meant to avenge the slight by a resort to war, and when the French asked that the treaty of July 15 be superseded by another, couched in similar terms, to which she could subscribe, there was a momentary inclination not only in the British Cabinet, but in the councils of Austria and Prussia, to make the compromise. Palmerston remained convinced, however, that France could not go to the length of declaring war, and stubbornly refused to concede even minor points which would have been a salve to French *amour-propre* and which could hardly have injured British prestige. The French, therefore, had no choice but to resume more definitely than ever their championship of Mehemet Ali and to continue war preparations.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the Convention of July 15 had been presented to and readily approved by the Porte. An ultimatum stating the substance of the Convention was thereupon despatched to the Viceroy, while new disorders were encouraged in his Syrian territories. The outcome was much as anticipated. Mehemet Ali scornfully refused to accept the offer of the Powers in the name of the Sultan, believing that his own resources were adequate for maintaining his conquests. In this position he was encouraged by the French agent, Count Walewski, who urged the Pasha to hold out for better terms than those lately accorded him. Mehemet Ali therefore suffered the ultimatum to expire without acceding to its terms, although he intimated to the consuls of the Powers in Alexandria that if he were given the whole of Syria for his life and Egypt as an hereditary possession he would submit.

The British Government had meanwhile determined to compel the Viceroy to accept such terms as were offered him, even at the risk of wholly terminating the friendly relations which had heretofore subsisted.⁵⁵ Instructions were therefore forwarded to Admiral Stopford, commanding the British fleet in the Mediterranean, that all communication between Egypt and Syria by sea should be cut off and that the fleet should be prepared to execute further measures in case Mehemet Ali should refuse to accede to the demands of the Powers. Admiral Stopford divided his naval

⁵⁴ Admiral Sir Charles Napier, *The War in Syria* (2 vols., London, 1842), I, 29 f.

⁵⁵ Palmerston's policy was very unpopular throughout with a considerable body of English merchants, who believed that in order to satisfy his wilful pride he would have had no hesitation in bringing their Egyptian interests to complete ruin. See William Cargill, *Mehemet Ali; Lord Palmerston; Russia and France* (London, 1840).

forces into two sections, the better to carry out his duties, one contingent under Commodore Sir Charles Napier being left to cruise off the coast of Syria, while the other sailed to blockade the harbor of Alexandria. Early in September the two sections of the fleet were reunited, and on September 11 the Egyptian forces at Beirut under Suleiman Pasha were commanded to withdraw.⁵⁶ As the reply was unsatisfactory, the British fleet, lately reënforced by two Austrian frigates, commenced a bombardment on the fortifications of the town. The Egyptians were forced to withdraw from the place, and a little later it was occupied by an allied force of marines.⁵⁷ The Porte followed the news of this action with a *firman* decreeing the deposition of Mehemet Ali, and the blockade of both Egypt and Syria.

These and other operations indicated at once the determination of the Powers to settle the Eastern Question on their own terms and the inability of Mehemet Ali long to resist. They also served notice to the world that the French attitude was not to be taken into account in concluding the issue. On their part, the French Government were at their wits' end upon learning of the bombardment of Beirut. The first reaction was a new upflaring of war spirit. More troops were mobilized and emergency military measures were taken. The Thiers administration, which had already threatened to appeal to arms, although anxious to avoid actually coming to blows, felt compelled to demand concessions from the Allies or to go the full length of the threat. Again the Powers hesitated to adhere to their plan of acting without France and again the masterful Palmerston carried his point.⁵⁸

At this juncture Louis Philippe asserted himself to prevent the eventuality of a European war. He had refrained from acting previously, believing that Mehemet Ali would prove too strong for the ready execution of the allied plans and that in consequence concessions would be made to France. Despairing of this at last, he determined to admit defeat with such grace as he could muster. Thiers was relieved of his office and a new ministry was formed with the pacific and sensible Guizot, erstwhile Ambassador to the Court of St. James, as the principal member. It became the task of the new ministry to recover for France a place in the councils of Europe by such means as might be found.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Napier, *op. cit.*, I, 55.

⁵⁷ A small British force was meanwhile operating along the middle Euphrates with two steam gunboats, and "their presence acted as a diversion against Ibrahim Pasha in eastern Syria and . . . exercised a considerable influence during the war with Mehemet Ali." — Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, II, 47.

⁵⁸ G. P. Gooch, in *The Camb. Hist. Journ.*, I, 176; Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-285, 292-305.

⁵⁹ *Annual Register*, 1839, p. 361; Rodkey, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-193.

The Powers of the Concert were vastly relieved and pleased at this move. Those who had lately blamed Palmerston as blinded by antagonism and bent on war now hailed him as the wisest statesman in Europe. For the moment he was without a rival in the courts of the Powers. He chose to use his power, not to make concessions to the vanquished, but to complete in more arrogant fashion than ever the subjection of Egypt. The fate of Mehemet Ali was decreed in London without regard to the willingness of France to participate on almost any terms in the final settlement of the Eastern Question. On November 14, 1840, the plenipotentiaries of the four Powers signed a memorandum, advising the Sultan to modify his attitude toward his vassal, and upon complete submission to confirm him in his former position as Pasha. A copy of this note was sent to Mehemet Ali with the recommendation that he instantly comply with its provisions. Simultaneously, his forces in Syria were subjected to new attacks both by sea and land in order to hasten his decision. A combined force of British marines, Austrians, and Turks stormed and took Sidon, defeated the Egyptian armies twice, and captured large quantities of war materials. Shortly afterward Admiral Stopford with the British fleet bombarded and reduced the fortress of St. Jean d'Acre, the strongest position on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.⁶⁰

The news of these developments thoroughly disheartened the old Viceroy. He agreed to surrender the Turkish fleet which had been treacherously given up to him in July, 1839, and to withdraw his forces from all occupied territory upon being given Egypt in hereditary possession. When even this concession was withheld from him, he signified his willingness to surrender unconditionally. The Great Powers, however, while unwilling to leave Mehemet Ali in possession of both routes to the East, were also unwilling to see him utterly divested of power. But even the entire relinquishment of his case into the hands of the Powers did not bring a speedy settlement. Once the danger of a serious war was definitely passed, agreement among the signatories of the recent supplementary pact of July 15, 1840, was difficult to arrive at.⁶¹ The conclusion of the whole problem was complicated by the fact that no settlement could be considered final which lacked the adherence of France, and no means could be devised, in view of Palmerston's uncompromising mood, of bringing France into the Concert on any basis which would be agreeable to all concerned. The "road to India" continued to be the stumbling block. Guizot

⁶⁰ Gooch, in *The Camb. Hist. Journ.*, I, 170.

⁶¹ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXVIII, 342-347.

proposed as a basis for a final settlement, the neutrality of both of the routes between the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean, by way of the Isthmus of Suez and Red Sea, and by way of Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Gulf, as the Straits had been neutralized. These routes, he said, "are a great interest to all of Europe." Perhaps a better occasion to protect them might never present itself.⁶²

None of the French suggestions was acceptable to the British Cabinet, however, and the *firman* issued by the Porte to Mehemet Ali on February 13, 1841, representing the substance of the wishes of the four coöperating Powers, did not receive the concurrence of France. This *firman* conferred Egypt upon Mehemet Ali in hereditary sovereignty, but on such a group of strict conditions, financial, military, and political, as practically to nullify the powers of the Pasha. Mehemet Ali protested loudly at such extensive restrictions, and this time his protests received a hearing in the councils of the great Powers. The British Cabinet had come to the view stated by Commodore Napier in February, 1841, that — "next to Egypt being a colony of England, it is best that it should be an independent power, paying tribute to the Porte. Our commerce to India will become very extensive; and the facility of traveling become easier every day."⁶³ The *firman* was obviously unsatisfactory in a number of respects. One more chance, therefore, presented itself of securing an arrangement to which the French Government could be a party. Such an arrangement was at length reached. Representations to the Porte that the terms of the *firman* of February 13 were too severe received the sanction of Louis Philippe's Government, and on June 1, 1841, a new *firman*, divested of many of the objectionable features of the previous one, was issued to Mehemet Ali and accepted by him. The quarrel thus being largely patched up both in the Levant and among the western Powers, a final formal arrangement in the form of a Protocol was signed at London by representatives of the five Powers, and the Concert of Europe was thus re-established.⁶⁴

The signing of this Convention was a matter of considerable importance for the time being in connection with the development of highways to the East. It left no possible rival or competitor in

⁶² F. P. G. Guizot, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de mon temps* (8 vols., Paris, 1858-1867), VI, 74, quoted in Rodkey, *op. cit.*, p. 213 n.

⁶³ Napier, *op. cit.*, II, 179-180.

⁶⁴ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXIX, 703 ff.; *Annual Register*, 1842, p. 285. See Vicomte de Guichen, *La Crise d'Orient de 1839 à 1841 et l'Europe* (Paris, 1921); Adolph Hasenclever, *Die Orientalische Frage in den Jahren 1838-1841 . . .* (Leipzig, 1914).

a position to interrupt the completion of British lines of communication which had been inaugurated formally just as the Eastern Question was approaching a crisis. Russia had withdrawn from the Straits. France was no longer dominant in Egypt and Syria. The will of Palmerston, prince of diplomats, had the force of law in both Constantinople and Alexandria. No longer were there obstacles to the formation of transportation companies operating in the seas bounding Egypt and establishing their own conveyances in Egypt. There being no longer any political ends to serve by a continuation of surveying enterprises in Mesopotamia, that route was largely neglected for the more practicable one already in general use.

The Convention was also prophetic of the future. Already the safety of the routes leading through the Mediterranean and from the Mediterranean eastward entered into European diplomacy as a major issue. Already Britain was willing to break a French alliance, to accept the hazard of a French war, and to assume the responsibility of police duty in the Levant to ensure free and constant access to India. She had at the same time sacrificed much to regain a position of leadership at Constantinople and had begun a policy of active intervention in the states flanking India in order to protect the approaches to India on the north and west. As communications improved, and industries, industrial populations, and commerce grew, these same essential highways were destined to be the cause of later conflicts. In the course of these difficulties, the Crimean War was necessary to keep Russia from penetrating too far into Turkey and Persia toward the Mesopotamian route and the northwest frontiers of India. A diplomatic duel with France over the building of the Suez Canal, in which Britain failed to prevent the success of a French Suez Canal Company, provoked a new policy, one postponed as long as possible, that of direct instead of indirect control of the routes to the East by Great Britain. This policy was suggested by various prominent Englishmen at the time of the Syrian crisis. Napier stated the case succinctly in his *War in Syria*:

. . . Steam navigation having got to such perfection, Egypt has become almost necessary to England as the half-way house to India, and indeed ought to be an English colony. Now if we wished to weaken Mehemet Ali, with a view, in the event of the breakup of the Turkish Empire, which is not far distant, to have seized Egypt as our share of the spoil, we were perfectly right in our policy. . .⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Napier, *op. cit.*, II, 184.

There is much reason to believe that Mehemet Ali was by no means so unkindly disposed toward Great Britain as was popularly supposed to be the case.⁶⁶ Although he irritated British susceptibilities by arrogant attacks on the Turks and by hampering the work of the Euphrates Expedition, he was ever willing to assist in developing a British highway through his own country of Egypt. Some responsible observers thought that in supporting the Turks and opposing the wishes of the Pasha, the British Government had "backed the wrong horse." M. Victor Fontanier, French Vice-Consul and "official observer" of British moves in western Asia during these years, and who was anything but sympathetic with British interests, gave a very frank and illuminating view of Anglo-Egyptian relations in his *Voyage dans l'Inde*, written soon after the crisis of 1840. In commenting on British attitude, he said:

It is difficult to understand . . . what great interest England had in obstructing the Pasha of Egypt in carrying his conquests as far as he pleased. She probably thought that the Pasha was hostile to her, and that she would become a tool of those [the French] who were supporting him. . . I believe in the good faith of the Pasha with the English. If it [an understanding] were advantageous to the former, it would give the latter an absolute control in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. It was necessary to represent Mehemet Ali as a friend of the French, though he was little enough that. . . England would certainly have been more diplomatic if she had favored the Pasha rather than the contrary.⁶⁷

A similar view was held by Commodore Sir Charles Napier, who had a large part in British operations in the Levant during the Syrian crisis.

. . . It might, perhaps, [he said] have been politic to have confined Mehemet Ali to Egypt, so that in the event of his stopping the road to India by Suez, we might have the road of the Euphrates open, one remaining in the possession of the Ottoman Empire, and the other in that of the Pasha of Egypt. It is not, however, usual for a Government to quarrel with their own interests, and it is so decidedly to the advantage of the Pasha of Egypt to facilitate by every possible means, the passage across the Isthmus of Suez, that on the

⁶⁶ Fontanier, *op. cit.*, II, 177; *Quarterly Review*, LXVII, 252-302.

⁶⁷ Fontanier, *op. cit.*, I, 358.

whole I believe the soundest policy of Great Britain would have been to have supported Mehemet Ali. . .⁶⁸

There is little evidence to show that Palmerston himself had much conception of the part which the new route of communications had already come to play in the affairs of England, for his attitude toward the wishes of Mehemet Ali could not have exerted a stronger influence on the Pasha to terminate all British intercourse through the countries under his control. Some of the departments of Government appreciated the need of keeping open the Red Sea line of communications, however, especially at a time when a British force was operating in Herat against the Persians, another was proceeding against the Afghans, while yet another war was looming up in China.⁶⁹

While Col. Patrick Campbell remained in Egypt as British Consul-General, the Pasha altogether disregarded his exterior political relations and maintained a steady interest in and approval of the steps being taken by British and Indian authorities for the improvement of the steam service in the seas adjacent and in projects for facilitating the passage through Egypt. However, in September, 1839, Col. Campbell was removed from office because of his open friendship for the Viceroy, and Col. G. Lloyd Hodges, who was more sympathetic with the Turkish cause, was sent out to succeed him. Until this time, the Pasha apparently had felt confident that while Britain could not but take strong measures to prevent the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, his own repeated assurances and the many concrete evidences he had given of friendship toward Great Britain and toward British enterprises would be in some measure reciprocated by the British Government. He was at all times careful, therefore, not to offend British subjects by word or deed, and he believed that his demands for territorial aggrandizement were such as could be approved in London without vitally compromising British policy with regard to Turkey.

About the time of the arrival of Col. Hodges, Mehemet Ali began to experience his first doubts of the action which the British Government had in contemplation. Although he was well versed in the elements of British foreign policy, he was unable to understand Palmerston's uncompromising and hostile attitude except as

⁶⁸ Napier, *op. cit.*, II, 278-279. See Fontanier, *op. cit.*, II, 177; William Cargill, *Mehemet Ali; Lord Palmerston; Russia and France* (London, 1840).

⁶⁹ On the Chinese War, see *Parl. Pap.*, 1843, No. 596, "Correspondence and Returns relative to the Supply of Troops, Vessels and Munitions of War, for Carrying on the Military Operations in China."

a possible mask for some ulterior motive. Early in 1840 he gave voice to his fear that England was planning to seize and occupy Egypt in order "to make of it a station on the road to India."⁷⁰ Contemporary articles in the English press pointing out the advantages which would accrue from the occupation of Egypt may well have lent color to the Pasha's fear.

After the substance of the four-power pact of July 15, 1840, reached him, Mehemet Ali threatened to use the one trump card he possessed, the power of closing the Red Sea route, in order to bring pressure to bear on Great Britain. When the English mail of September, 1840, arrived at Alexandria, Col. Hodges considered it best to secure from the Pasha an expression of his willingness to allow the packets to proceed as usual before they were landed. When he called on the Viceroy to request a safe conduct for the British and Indian mails, he was very coldly received and was told no assurances could be given him. Col. Hodges had previously ascertained from the French Consul-General, however, that on board the steamer *Oriental*, which had just arrived at Alexandria, were some French mails addressed to the Pasha and some of the French officers in the Pasha's service, and that the Pasha was aware of this. Hodges thereupon replied that he would give orders that the mails should not be landed. At this Mehemet Ali relented, and offered to let them pass in safety "for this time only."⁷¹

On the same day, September 19, as Col. Hodges learned shortly afterward, Mehemet Ali had also been waited upon by Capt. Thomas Lyons, the agent in Egypt for the East India Company. In the discussion which followed bearing on various of the Company's interests during the unsettled times which had arrived, the Pasha gave assurance that "not only should the mails pass in perfect safety on the present occasion, but that they should continue to do so as long as he himself had authority in Egypt."⁷² It subsequently developed that at the very hour when Hodges called on the Pasha and was told that no guarantees could be given for the safety in transit of British mails, a mail from India, which had arrived a short time previously at Suez, had already nearly reached Alexandria under the safe conduct of the Viceroy.⁷³

This incident, occurring at a moment when his feeling toward the British Government was very bitter, at the time when the news was coming in of the defeat of Egyptian armies and the bombardment of Beirut at the hands of the British, throws considerable light on both the character and the policies of Mehemet Ali.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Rodkey, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁷¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1841, No. [323.], Pt. II, 249.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

Realizing that he would gain nothing by interrupting the Indian route, he took care that his action in keeping the route open should not appear in the guise of a concession to the British official representative, but rather as an act of generosity to British merchant interests.⁷⁴ At the moment when the English fleet was bombarding Acre, the Pasha was holding conversations with representatives of a new British steam line, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and he is quoted by one of them as having said, in effect:

I am not at war with the British nation, but only with Lord Palmerston, and therefore I shall give you every facility in passing your passengers and mails through Egypt; look to me as a friend, and when you go home, explain to your nation my sentiments. . . It is very bad policy on the part of your government to fight with me; this is your high road to India, and I shall always promote it.⁷⁵

And at various times during the dark days of 1840 and 1841, when the Pasha appeared to have lost all in his gamble for power, he still found time to discuss with one of the founders of the Peninsular and Oriental Company the details of an arrangement whereby goods in small quantities might be shipped through Egypt.⁷⁶ The Pasha readily coöperated with the new corporation in offering security of transport, conveyances, and low transit duties, which he himself determined without reference to his liege at Constantinople.⁷⁷ And all the while the navigation of the Nile was being improved, and projects even for a Suez Canal were being discussed.⁷⁸

It is one of the most striking facts in the record of the Near Eastern crisis that at no time were communications sent by the

⁷⁴ D. A. Cameron, *Egypt in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1898), p. 216. See *Parl. Pap.*, 1840, No. 277, p. 72.

⁷⁵ Statement of Mr. J. R. Engledue, a Superintendent of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, before a Select Parliamentary Committee in 1858. — *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. 175-176.

⁷⁶ Arthur Anderson, *Communications with India, China, etc., via Egypt* (London, priv. pr., 1843), App., pp. 16-18; *Asiatic Journal*, XXXV, N.S., Pt. II, 283-284; *ibid.*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 323.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 398; Anderson, *op. cit.*, App., pp. 32-38. Mehemet Ali chose entirely to ignore the Convention of August 16, 1838, relating to commerce and navigation between Great Britain and Turkey. — Hertslet's *Commercial Treaties*, V, 506-535; *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXVI, 688-692.

⁷⁸ F.O. 97/411, Arthur Anderson to Lord Palmerston, 20 Feb., 1841; D. A. Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 236; *Asiatic Journal*, XXXV, N.S., Pt. II, 284. A notification published by the Viceroy 12 Oct., 1841, provided, however, that in future all vessels navigating the Nile and the new Mahmoudie Canal must be manned by Egyptians and sail under the Egyptian flag. See *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XXIX, 1195.

Egyptian route in the least delayed or endangered, although messages sent by the route through Mesopotamia were tampered with by the Arabs, in spite of English gunboats on the Euphrates.⁷⁹ Indeed, the correspondence between England and India through Egypt in the five years from 1835 to 1841 considerably more than doubled, the year 1840 showing a large increase over any previous year.⁸⁰ The years following also saw a great increase in the passenger traffic through Egypt, and a large percentage of overland travellers lingered in Egypt to view the curious streets of Cairo and to make tours up the Nile to the Pyramids and not infrequently to the decaying ruins of ancient Thebes.

English appreciation for the Pasha's courtesy in maintaining the overland route during the whole period of the political crisis, while conspicuously absent from official correspondence, was nevertheless shown by many private concerns after the affair had been settled. As one expression of the attitude held by the English mercantile interests, a committee was formed in London in 1842 for striking a gold subscription medal to Mehemet Ali. This was —

To hand down to posterity an honourable record of the conduct of the Pasha of Egypt during the late war, when, ports being blockaded, towns and villages laid waste, the subjects he governed destroyed by thousands, and his own political and personal existence threatened, he nobly afforded protection to our numerous countrymen in Egypt, and to their property, and permitted them, as in peace, to traffic and travel, the overland route being kept open as usual.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, N.S., Pt. II, 241; W. P. Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India* (London, 1857), p. 41.

⁸⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, XXXV, N.S., Pt. II, 96.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, N.S., Pt. II, 416. It was said that "the indefatigable Mr. Waghorn" was one of the honorary secretaries of the committee.

CHAPTER XII

BEGINNINGS OF THE SUEZ CANAL

THE Canal question, which became a prominent issue in European diplomacy toward the middle of the nineteenth century, had a long and varied series of antecedents.¹ From the time of King Sesostris, eighteen centuries before the Christian era, projects were formed and sometimes executed for a connection by water between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Time after time during the rise and fall of empires such waterways were allowed to pass into decay and ruin.² Yet even after centuries of neglect, the idea of a canal did not perish. It appealed particularly strongly to Napoleon Bonaparte because of the possibility of thus opening up a French channel to the East whereby the English might be circumvented and a French commercial empire developed. Hence, among the scientists carried to Egypt on his famous expedition of 1798 were several surveyors, who were presently engaged in running lines of levels between the Mediterranean and Red Seas as the basis for a more definite canal project.³

In the Napoleonic enterprise, however, there was one element of novelty. All of the ancient canal undertakings had been limited to effecting a communication between the Red Sea and the Nile and only indirectly with the Mediterranean. Those early canals, therefore, had been useful principally in developing the commerce and industries of Egypt itself. There are few evidences of a through traffic from East to West by way of these shallow waterways. With the limited geographical knowledge of ancient times the value of a more adequate waterway was not

¹ *The Oriental Herald*, V, 2-5; E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (Cambridge, Eng., 1928), p. 8, *passim*; W. G. Hamley, *A New Sea and an Old Land, being Papers suggested by a visit to Egypt at the end of 1869* (London, 1871), pp. 1-25.

² *Calcutta Review*, XXIV, 323. An excellent survey of ancient canal works in Egypt is given in J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez* (2 vols., Paris, 1901), I, Ch. 1.

³ J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (New York, 1877), p. 256.

apparent.⁴ But as distant countries became increasingly aware of each other in late modern times, the utility of a direct water passage from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea was obvious. Bonaparte, then, had in mind a canal which would accommodate the largest ocean vessels, and for that reason he broached the idea of a waterway, leading, not from the Nile, but directly across the Isthmus of Suez.⁵

The French survey of the Isthmus was poorly done. It began in January, 1799, and was interrupted in February. It was resumed in September and completed in December of the same year. The staff of surveyors was several times changed, different kinds of instruments were employed on different portions, and the work was done hastily in long sections. No findings were verified by a second examination, due to lack of time and the vigorous hostility of the Arabs. As a very natural result, the findings were filled with errors. One of the conclusions reported by the Surveying Commission and accepted everywhere as genuine, was that the waters of the Red Sea were no less than thirty-two feet and six inches above those of the Mediterranean.⁶ This assertion, which alone might have been suspected of error, appeared to be supported by old accounts, which showed that salt water was carried as much as twenty miles up an ancient Nile canal by the tides of the Red Sea.⁷

The importance of the French survey of the Isthmus of Suez to the cause of improved communication can hardly be overrated, although it resulted in nothing tangible at the time. The results of the survey, published in Napoleon's monumental *Description d'Égypte*, so impressed the contemporary world that no one questioned the accuracy of the reports.⁸ At various times after 1815 suggestions were not lacking for a canal directly joining the Mediterranean and Red Seas, but most of these assumed the cor-

⁴ [David Urquhart], "Mr. Urquhart on the Suez Canal in 1853," a chapter distributed with the *Diplomatic Review* for 1876, p. 421.

⁵ However, Napoleon's engineers, following their survey, recommended deepening the channel of the Nile and the opening of a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea in the first instance. Cf. *The Edinburgh Review*, LX, 452.

⁶ *Description d'Égypte* . . . I, 57, 58; J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 138-149; *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, pp. 28, 29. The estimate of 32 feet and 6 inches difference in levels is based upon high tide at Suez and low tide at Tineh on the Mediterranean. See the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* for Oct., 1825; *Southern Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1846, p. 69, (an article by M. Linant, one of the Pasha's engineers), and the *Report and Plan of the International Scientific Commission* (London, 1857), pp. 13, 22-25.

⁷ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 149-152.

⁸ One of the leading Nile-Red Sea projects was brought forward by the English engineer, R. H. Galloway, who was later made a Bey by Mehemet Ali. In 1825 he proposed such a canal to the Pasha, found him favorably disposed toward the idea, and attempted to interest English investors in forming a canal company. Steam

rectness of the report of the French engineers.⁹ Definite plans had been made for cutting through the Isthmus of Panama, a vastly greater task than that of piercing the Isthmus of Suez, before the fallacy of the difference in levels of the Mediterranean and Red Seas had been fully exposed.¹⁰

Those projects which were brought forward after the Napoleonic wars for a direct junction of the Mediterranean and Red Seas across the Isthmus of Suez were generally based on the idea that an isthmian tidewater canal would have a fairly strong current running through it, or that locks or "sluices" would be required.¹¹ Various plans for lock canals across the Isthmus were put forward about 1825, when recovery from the late series of wars and the salutary effects of the Industrial Revolution were bringing all kinds of speculative ventures into existence. Most of these were based on the idea of employing as far as possible the natural waterways already in existence on the Isthmus, the Bitter Lakes and Lake Menzaleh, and it was said that "It may be safely stated . . . that there is not a spot in the world where a water communication of equal extent could be made with the same facility, and where human skill would produce so great a change with so small an effort."¹² "Were it found practicable to employ steam, it is probable that the voyage from England to Bombay, which at present occupies four months, might be accomplished by the canal in six weeks, the distance being about 7200 miles."¹³

When Capt. Chesney went to Egypt in 1830 to begin his work as a pathfinder, one of his instructions was, he says, "to survey the Isthmus of Suez with a view to reporting on the practicability of carrying out the project of a great ship canal, the first modern

navigation had not then made enough headway, however, to give weight to the enterprise. — *Asiatic Journal*, XX, O.S., 364, 600. Estimates for building such a canal approximated £1,200,000. — *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, p. 33.

⁹ See, for example, the article by Capt. J. B. Seeley, in the *Asiatic Journal*, XX, O.S., 538 ff.; *Ibid.*, XVIII, O.S., 330. Capt. Seeley's project was primarily a commercial one for a canal joining the Red Sea with the Nile "across the Isthmus of Suez." "A Company established at Suez," he said, "and possessing the Canal, would, in the course of a very few years, possess a prodigious trade and realize . . . immense profits. It would assist the mother country, the East India Company in their commercial operations, and open a vast field for speculation."

¹⁰ *The Oriental Herald*, V, 1, based on an account in the London *Examiner* of 13 March, 1825.

¹¹ Mr. James Silk Buckingham, founder and editor of *The Oriental Herald*, supported the idea of an isthmian canal with locks, and thought that "this great undertaking is . . . more worthy of general attention than most of those which at present agitate the public mind." — *Ibid.*, V, 9.

¹² *Parl. Pap.*, 1834, No. 478, p. 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

suggestion of which had come from the savants of the French Republic."¹⁴ Chesney's report that in his survey of the Isthmus he found no essential difference in the levels of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, although considered by the Select Parliamentary Committee of 1831, had little effect on canal projects.¹⁵ The findings of a single unskilled artillery officer could hardly prevail against those of a corps of reputable professional engineers, even of another nation.

Meanwhile there was considerable correspondence between the Foreign Office and the India Board respecting the design, "or rather the wish," of Mehemet Ali to cut a canal from Suez to Cairo. The India Board anticipated "none but desirable consequences from the accomplishment of such a work,"¹⁶ and by 1834 British officialdom was ready to give countenance to any such undertaking. Indeed, the forward state of the canal idea tended to neutralize enthusiasm for the projected expedition to the Euphrates River in the minds of many. But at this juncture the proposal of the Pasha to embark on a canal joining the Nile with the Red Sea was obscured by several new developments. To begin with, a French engineer in the service of Mehemet Ali, M. Linant de Bellefonds, usually known as Linant Bey, executed a series of surveys between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and failed to discover the anticipated difference in levels. His reports to that effect introduced an element of doubt into the practicability of a Nile-Red Sea canal, and stimulated in the mind of Ferdinand de Lesseps, then French Consul in Egypt, the idea of a direct sea-level canal across the Isthmus.¹⁷ In the second place, the proposal made by Galloway Bey that a railway be built from Cairo to Suez, because of the facts that this offered the same opportunities for collecting tolls and could be executed at a cost far below that of any canal, strongly appealed to the Pasha and also commended itself to British authorities. The English Consul at Cairo, Col. Campbell, wrote to Palmerston on January 1, 1834, that: "Measures have . . . been taken for the railroad from this to Suez, and as these operations will occupy the Pasha's mind (which requires occupation), and that they will also require all the money he can dispose of, it is to be hoped that these plans will be a good guarantee for his future conduct."¹⁸

¹⁴ F. R. Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, p. 2.

¹⁵ S. Lane-Poole (Ed.), *Life of General F. R. Chesney*, p. 467; C. H. Rockwell, *The Suez Canal* (1867), p. 2.

¹⁶ Foreign Office, Suez Canal Papers, 97/411, J. Neill to J. B. Macaulay, 9 Aug., 1833.

¹⁷ Cameron, *Egypt*, p. 236.

¹⁸ F. O. 97/411, Campbell to Palmerston, 1 Jan., 1834.

By the time the refusal of the British Government to guarantee to the Pasha a definite series of rates on mails and goods to be transported by the proposed railway and the death of the chief promoter, Galloway Bey, had brought about a suspension of preparations for the line, the political situation in the Levant had entered upon an acute phase and rapidly developed into a crisis. Nothing further was done with regard to either a canal or a railway until after the settlement of 1841. Thereafter projects for a canal were uppermost for a few years. The East India Company preferred a canal to a railway.¹⁹ The newly-formed Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company also desired a canal, which would make possible the development of their comprehensive plan of steam communication with a much smaller steam equipment than would otherwise be required. In 1841, when the Managing Director of the Company, Arthur Anderson, was in Egypt making arrangements for the passage of mails, passengers, and goods through the country in connection with the new line of steam vessels, he took occasion to study the question of a sea level canal between Suez and Pelusium. In a memorandum on the subject which he sent to Palmerston, he estimated the cost of such a canal as he proposed at £250,000, but thought it would be a profitable venture at ten times the amount, since "the whole of our political and commercial intercourse with the vast territories of the east would of necessity fall into the Channel, and the distance between them and Great Britain for all purposes be reduced by many thousands of miles."²⁰ He also thought such a canal would benefit all of Europe except, perhaps, Russia. He believed that the Pasha would give a concession for such a canal, but even if he refused, a right of way could doubtless be secured from the Sultan. The data on which his calculations were based he was obliged to keep secret for the time being, but he secured them from "a man who has served as an engineer in Egypt for twenty years."²¹

Anderson's views on the practicability of a canal through the Isthmus of Suez, divested of their confidential element and published a little later in the form of a pamphlet, had considerable effect on public sentiment in England.²² To the other objections to a canal joining the Nile and Red Sea was added after 1840 the

¹⁹ Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

²⁰ F. O. 97/411, Arthur Anderson to Palmerston, 20 Feb., 1841.

²¹ F. O. 97/411, Arthur Anderson to Palmerston, 20 Feb., and 18 March, 1841.

²² Arthur Anderson, *The Practicability and Utility of Opening a Communication between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean by a Ship-Canal* . . . (London, 1843); *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., II, 304, 305, "Review of Five Pamphlets for Different Plans of Improving Eastern Communication."

rapidly growing size of the steamship, which would scarcely be able to navigate any channel which could be constructed on the basis of the Nile waterway. Practically all of the plans brought forward after the close of the Syrian crisis therefore rested on the idea of a direct cut between the two seas.²³

At the same time a distinct change occurred in British official attitude toward the whole canal idea. Information secretly transmitted by Anderson and others, casting grave doubts on the prevalent view that the Mediterranean and Red Seas differed some thirty-three feet in levels, made a large, sea-level canal appear perfectly feasible.²⁴ Then it was that the British Foreign Office began to experience strong fears as to the political questions which might be induced by the construction of such a waterway, which would be to all intents and purposes a "second Bosphorus." Lord Palmerston was not long in arriving at the conclusion that, however great the commercial advantages, Great Britain might easily be placed in a very awkward position by such a waterway. All the objections and more which had been used to show the impracticability of giving any public guarantees to an Egyptian Railway would naturally apply to a Suez Canal. Such an attitude as this was only encouraged by the entire willingness of the French to sponsor the canal idea. A line of policy on a matter which held such vast potentialities, of constructive service on the one hand and political danger on the other, was very hard to determine. But the British Foreign Office could not see that between opposing the actual construction of a new strait severing Africa from Asia and embarking on another line of conduct which might necessitate the annexation of Egypt by force of arms, there was any middle ground.²⁵

Although the breaking up of the Ottoman Empire was popularly believed to be at hand, it required more courage than the British Government possessed, in view of the unsettled state of European international relations, deliberately to adopt a policy which would inevitably create an Egyptian Question apart from the perennial Turkish Question. It appeared to the Cabinet and particularly to Lord Palmerston that the peace of Europe and the safety of the British people unquestionably lay in opposing a

²³ As late as 1842, however, it was stated that "Mehemet Ali intends to construct a canal between Fostat, Old Cairo, and Kolzim, near Suez, such as formerly existed under the occupation of the Arabs." — *Asiatic Journal*, XXXIX, N.S., Pt. II, 342.

²⁴ Several unofficial surveys were made of the Isthmus of Suez in the fifteen years after 1841, all of them indicating that there was little if any difference in the levels of the Mediterranean and Red Seas. See *London Times*, 8 April, 1853.

²⁵ Edward Clarkson, *The Suez Navigable Canal for Accelerated Communication with India* (London, 1843), p. 14.

project which could hardly fail to create new international issues of the greatest moment. It therefore became the self-imposed task of the British Government to make an isthmian canal appear the more impossible and impracticable as it became the more feasible from an engineering point of view.²⁶

A railway was a different matter. An iron band from Cairo to Suez would not alter the geographical status of Egypt in the least, and hence would produce no international complications. Palmerston himself summed up the matter in a despatch to Sir Stratford Canning, British Ambassador at the Porte, on July 24, 1851. Referring to French attempts to secure the approval of the Pasha of Egypt for an isthmian canal, he pointed out that one passage in the Firman of Investiture of February 13, 1841, required the Pasha of Egypt to secure the consent of the Sultan on all important matters pertaining to Egypt.

That passage [he said] can only in reason be considered as applicable to matters which internally or externally would have an important bearing on the condition of Egypt as a part of the Turkish Empire, and can scarcely be construed as applying to so simple a domestic improvement as the construction of a Railway. A ship canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, if such a work were practicable, would be a different thing: and it is needless to point out how such a work, changing as it would the relative position of some of the Maritime powers of Europe towards each other, would involve the possibility of political consequences of great import and might seriously affect the foreign relations of the Turkish Empire.²⁷

The French, with the support of their Government, were anxious to proceed with a project disavowed by their English rivals. Thereupon, the fundamental importance to Great Britain of the Red Sea route to India and the East asserted itself. In order to prevent the route from falling wholly into the hands of rivals, the British Government was compelled to change its initial attitude of aloofness toward the canal scheme into one of definite opposition. As a counterpoise, the Egyptian Railway was advocated. "In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government," wrote Palmerston to Murray, British Consul-General in Egypt, in May,

²⁶ It appears probable that Palmerston was aware of the error in the calculations made by the French surveyors in 1799 and was convinced of the possibility and perhaps feasibility of a sea-level canal across the Isthmus of Suez years before the English public had access to information which might lead to the same conclusions.

²⁷ F. O. 78/411, Palmerston to Sir Stratford Canning, 24 July, 1851.

1847, "the commercial advantages to be derived from the canal, even supposing that it should be possible to make it, would be attained nearly as well and at a much less cost of time and money by a railway across the Desert from the Nile to the Red Sea."²⁸ In this controversy, the other European Powers almost uniformly supported the project for a canal as opposed to a railway.²⁹ The French thus had the advantage of considerable moral support, the friendship and confidence of the Pasha of Egypt, and, as time went on, a vast amount of corroborative data of all kinds on the feasibility of the ship canal. But the English were able long to withstand the weight of hostile influence because of naval supremacy and the memory of naval actions of 1840,³⁰ and particularly because of British influence at the Porte.

By 1847 the French canal proposition had reached a stage sufficiently advanced to warrant definite attention on the part of British authorities:

It cannot be unknown to your Lordship [wrote Murray to Palmerston, May 3, 1847], that various projects for the junction of the Red Sea to the Mediterranean by means of a ship canal through the Isthmus of Suez have been from time to time discussed. . . Now however that a plan has been formed, purporting to be complete in all its details, and that it has been favourably received by the Egyptian Government, I think it my duty to give your Lordship such information as I can collect . . . inasmuch as the project, if it should prove feasible, would doubtless more materially affect the commercial and political interests of Great Britain in the East than any other change which scientific enterprise could effect in the physical structure of the earth.

The plan under consideration . . . has been proposed by M. Linant, a French officer, who has superintended the construction of all the canals, bridges, and aqueducts which the Pasha has made in Egypt, and who is certainly one of the

²⁸ F. O. Suez Canal Papers, 97/408, Palmerston to C. A. Murray, 27 May, 1847.

²⁹ F. O. 97/408, Murray to Palmerston, 4 Nov., 1846; Palmerston to Murray, 27 March, 1847; *On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, pp. 3-7, 44; Galloway, *Observations on the Proposed Improvements in the Overland Route*, pp. 4, 16.

³⁰ "England is . . . the grand object of the Pasha's fear and jealousy. Nor is his fear unfounded; the occupation of Aden, the War in Syria, and the hostile demonstration against Alexandria, are not likely to be forgotten, while the constant solicitation of Englishmen to be invested with a monopoly of the transit to India tend to nourish jealousy."—*On the Communications between Europe and India through Egypt*, p. 47.

most practical and experienced engineers in His Highness' service. . . In the present advanced state of science I dare not take it upon myself . . . to assure any one of its impracticability.⁸¹

This could hardly have been a surprise to Palmerston, who had already written, on February 8, in urging Murray to push the railway as much as possible:

With regard . . . to the Ship Canal . . . you should lose no opportunity of enforcing on the Pasha and his Ministers the costliness, if not the impracticability, of such a project; and you should point out that the persons who press upon the Pasha such a chimerical scheme, do so evidently for the purpose of diverting him from the Railway which would be perfectly practicable and comparatively cheap.⁸²

In reply to Murray's representation of May 3, Palmerston pointed out the difficulty of being certain of the practicability of constructing the canal, or even the certainty of its utility. Murray was instructed to "remain entirely passive on the subject," and to continue to advocate the railway as a matter of certain value, and he added that "the reasons which would make Her Majesty's Government prefer the railway would also render that channel of communication better for the interests of the Pasha."⁸³ Murray was not slow in taking his cue. In July he was able to report that "We may safely number the Suez ship-canal among the most visionary projects of the day," and that he thought Mehemet Ali would not go on with it. The railway was being urged as a "practicable substitute."⁸⁴ Henceforward British authorities both at home and in Egypt consistently displayed an attitude of complete skepticism and incredulity toward the canal scheme.

Meanwhile the Egyptian Government, inspired by French counsels, determined to make an official examination of the levels of the Mediterranean and Red Seas. In 1845 M. Lenon, engineer to the Pasha, who had been in Egypt since the French survey of 1799, expressed his doubt of the correctness of the original calculations, and requested M. Talabot, a friend, to come out to Egypt and revive the project for establishing a water com-

⁸¹ F. O. 97/408, C. A. Murray to Viscount Palmerston, 3 May, 1847.

⁸² F. O. 97/411, Foreign Office to Mr. Murray, 8 Feb., 1847. Palmerston insisted all along that if the Canal were to be built, it must be with Egyptian money.

⁸³ F. O. 97/408, Palmerston to C. A. Murray, 27 May, 1847.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Murray to Palmerston, 9 July, 1847.

munication between the two seas. This led to the forming of a semi-official surveying commission by the Pasha, consisting of Talabot, Robert Stephenson, representing England, and an Austrian engineer, Negrelli.³⁵ These men, with their assistants, devoted considerable time in 1847 to investigating the possibilities of a ship canal. The Pasha facilitated these operations in every way possible, furnishing supplies and equipment, placing at the disposal of the engineers the wide knowledge and practical experience of his own staff of engineers, including the able M. Linant, and bearing the expenses connected with the undertaking, a matter of some £4000.

The findings of the group had considerable bearing on the future of the canal scheme. All members of the party agreed that there was no essential difference in the levels of the two seas except in the height and time of tides, but they differed widely in their opinions as to the practicability of a sea level canal. The Austrian engineers thought a canal quite possible, if not feasible, and believed that one of the greatest obstacles would be the construction of suitable termini and approaches at either end of the channel.³⁶ The French believed that a canal with locks admitting the largest vessels would function successfully. But Stephenson was convinced that any such canal was altogether out of the question. He stated subsequently that he had great faith in the idea of a sea-level canal as long as the thirty-odd feet of difference in level was believed to exist, for he considered a current of three or four miles per hour necessary to keep the channel clear. A long channel without any current flowing through it he believed to be useless; in effect he thought the canal would be, as was later said, a "stinking ditch." Moreover, he was convinced that any canal accommodating the largest vessels would be impracticable because of its enormous cost; and that since it could never be a profitable venture, he maintained it was useless to attempt it.³⁷ Stephenson therefore recommended a railway as the only safe and profitable way of eliminating the unsatisfactory transit arrangements of the Transit Administration. Although these convictions were doubtless inspired by his interest in the proposed Egyptian Railway, and were very likely influenced by the known sentiments of the British Foreign Office, they served as convenient

³⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 223. Thomas Waghorn wrote Stephenson early in 1847, urging him to have nothing to do with the proposed survey, as it was but a wild scheme with which the plotting French had deluded the now partially demented old Pasha. — F. O. 97/411, Waghorn to Stephenson, 13 March, 1847.

³⁶ F. O. 97/408, C. A. Murray to Palmerston, 9 July, 1847.

³⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 224.

arguments for the opponents of the canal scheme long after they had been completely disproved.⁸⁸

While the practicability of the canal and all of the accompanying issues were being busily discussed throughout western Europe, the old Viceroy of Egypt breathed his last. For months before his death on August 2, 1849, he had been unsound of mind, and the Government of Egypt had been carried on in his name by his son and heir apparent, Ibrahim Pasha, until his death in 1848, and thereafter by some of his ministers. Mehemet Ali's successor was his nephew, Abbas Pasha, a stupid and pleasure-loving young man, but one who believed that his interests were bound up with those of the English. During the six years of his rule, therefore, little was heard of the canal. The Pasha's French advisers were all replaced with Englishmen, and as the English Consul-General had the entire confidence of the young potentate, only English schemes were put on foot in Egypt.

As a result of this diplomatic revolution, the French, who had lately been abetting the Viceroy of Egypt against his suzerain, the Sultan, now betook themselves to Constantinople, where they speedily insinuated themselves into Turkish councils and plotted to overthrow Abbas, and with him English hegemony.⁸⁹ The Porte was not averse from the idea of ousting the family of the hated Mehemet Ali, and willingly listened to plans for dethroning Abbas. The latter was in a precarious position at best, for while British authorities rejoiced at the discomfiture of the French, whom Mehemet Ali was always suspected of favoring, they would take no steps which might involve the slightest obligation with regard to Egypt. The most which could be expected from the British Government was a friendly attitude, and this, at any rate, was given.

The temporary disappearance of French influence in Egypt made possible the revival of the pet project of the English, the railway, which was desired by Government and commercial interests alike. From the time of his accession, the advantages of this enterprise had been pointed out to Abbas, who found the idea attractive. In October, 1850, he had an opportunity to begin definite arrangements for a railway at a time when Robert Stephenson, who had already discussed the canal question with

⁸⁸ *Diplomatic Review* (1853), p. 421, the opinion of David Urquhart; Barthelmy St. Hilaire, *New Facts and Figures relative to the Isthmus of Suez Canal*, edited by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps (London, 1856), p. 33. See Stephenson's statement in *The Engineer* for 15 Feb., 1856.

⁸⁹ [Anonymous], *The Present Crisis in Egypt in Relation to Our Overland Communication with India*, No. 1 (London, 1851), p. 15.

him, was in Egypt. The Pasha remarked that he proposed to build the road in two sections, to avoid unduly wounding French susceptibilities, the first from Alexandria to Cairo, and afterward another from Cairo to Suez. He himself was to advance the money and furnish the labor for the construction, leaving only engineering supplies and railway equipment to be acquired elsewhere.⁴⁰ Stephenson approved these plans and returned to England. Early in 1851 the Pasha requested him to act as chief engineer for the railway, and in July an agreement was concluded for the enterprise. Stephenson was to complete the railway within two years, and receive for his services the tidy sum of £55,000.⁴¹

Work on the railway proceeded steadily in spite of French attempts to bring it to a halt by invoking the aid of the Porte.⁴² A corps of English surveyors laid out the first section of the line before the end of 1851, and Egyptian fellahs were set at work preparing the embankments for the rails.⁴³ The line was not completed as quickly as had been planned, but progress on it was so satisfactory that before the end of the year 1853 the section from Alexandria to the Nile was opened, and from that time forward the Mahmoudie Canal, the opening of which had been attended with such desirable consequences, gradually fell into disuse.⁴⁴ A part of the line was double tracked at the outset; all of it was within a few years.

The first section of the railway which had been so long advocated was completed none too soon.⁴⁵ Hardly had communication thus been established between Alexandria and Cairo when Abbas' short reign ingloriously ended. He was succeeded by Saïd Pasha, whose first care was to welcome back to Egypt the French who had been ousted by his predecessor. Again English counsels were unsought, and English interests were protected only because of the deference and silent tribute paid to sea power and

⁴⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, pp. 223, 224, Examination of Robert Stephenson by the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

⁴¹ *London Times*, 30 July, 1851.

⁴² F. O. 78/411, Palmerston to Sir Stratford Canning, 24 July, 1851; Anon., *The Present Crisis in Egypt* . . . p. 23; Anon., *The Egyptian Railway; or, The Interest of England in Egypt* (London, 1852), pp. 3, 4.

⁴³ Because of his power of using forced labor, the Pasha expected to construct the line between Alexandria and Cairo, some 140 miles, at a cost of less than £6000 per mile. Very little grading was required in this section. Actually the cost, including the first rolling stock, was about £11,000 per mile. The railway was to cross the Nile near Cairo by using the enormous irrigation barrage just completed by French Engineers. *Parl. Pap.*, 1851, No. 605, p. 225; *London Times*, 4 Dec., 1851.

⁴⁴ *London Times*, 8 April, 1853.

⁴⁵ The line between Cairo and Suez was not completed until 1858.

to the recovery of British prestige at Constantinople. For with the opening of the Crimean War the Porte was compelled to rely very largely on British strength.

With the accession of Saïd Pasha, a definite French project for the construction of a canal across the Isthmus of Suez brought its author, Ferdinand de Lesseps, into prominence. De Lesseps was well fitted to be the founder of such an enterprise. His father had been the French Political Agent in Egypt during the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, and had materially assisted in the rise to power of Mehemet Ali. In this way Matthew de Lesseps was largely instrumental in establishing the tradition of French sympathy and friendship for Egypt which his son so ably capitalized later. Young Ferdinand de Lesseps spent his early youth in company with the members of Mehemet Ali's household, including Saïd, who succeeded to the viceroyalty in 1854.⁴⁶

De Lesseps was serving as *élève* or "understudy" in the French Consulate at Cairo when the first steps were taken toward opening the overland route. There he watched with great interest the early efforts of Chesney and, a bit later, Waghorn.⁴⁷ Although his early adult life was spent in France and in Algeria, De Lesseps did not cease to ponder upon the mighty advantages which would accrue from an open, fully-navigable channel between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. He was restrained from taking any active steps, however, by the realization that nothing of importance could be accomplished during the lifetime of Mehemet Ali.⁴⁸ Immediately upon the news of his death, De Lesseps determined to put his plans on foot. In a letter, dated Paris, July 8, 1852, to his boyhood friend S. W. Ruyssemaers, then Dutch Consul-General in Egypt, he outlined his scheme in fairly tangible form for the first time, but added, "I confess that my scheme is still a mere dream and I do not shut my eyes to the fact that so long as I alone believe it to be possible, it is virtually impossible."⁴⁹ Ruyssemaers replied that it would be untimely to push the proposition at the moment, and De Lesseps sadly retired to his estate in Algeria.

He was still in retirement when the announcement of the

⁴⁶ Ferdinand de Lesseps, *The Suez Canal. Letters and Documents Descriptive of Its Rise and Progress in 1854-1856* (Trans., London, 1876), p. 65.

⁴⁷ McCoan, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-259; De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal* . . . p. 26; Fitzgerald, *The Great Canal at Suez*, I, *passim*; London *Times*, 8 April, 1853.

⁴⁸ Mehemet Ali had opposed the idea of an isthmian canal because he believed it would have the effect of separating Egypt from Syria and Arabia, which he considered as rightfully belonging to the Egyptian Pashalik.

⁴⁹ De Lesseps, *op. cit.*, p. 2; J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 244-246.

death of Abbas and the accession of Saïd reached him. His first act was to write to the new Viceroy to renew his old friendship and to assure him of a congratulatory visit. "Not a word was said about the Suez Canal, a subject I shall not broach until I am quite sure of my ground," he wrote his mother-in-law.⁵⁰ Hurrying out to Egypt, De Lesseps was soon installed in a mansion as a personal and honored friend of the new ruler, whose every deed he was careful to applaud. "I must act with the greater prudence," he wrote, "that Ruysseuaers remembers having heard Saïd Pasha remark, before his accession to power, that if ever he became the Viceroy of Egypt he should follow the example of his father, Mehemet Ali, who had declined to have anything to do with cutting a canal across the Isthmus of Suez because of the difficulties it might lead to with England."⁵¹ But by a remarkable exercise of tact and patience, De Lesseps was able to translate his social position into a business proposition without in the least exciting the Viceroy's suspicion or his apprehension. The great plan was first presented on November 15, 1854. De Lesseps' confidence in the scheme and his enthusiasm were infectious. "I am convinced;" exclaimed Saïd, "I accept your plan. . . Consider the matter settled. You may rely upon me."⁵² Following this favorable reception of the proposal, De Lesseps presented the Viceroy with an "impromptu" minute, containing a plan which had been drawn up and waiting for two years. On November 24 a preliminary draft of a concession to be issued by the Viceroy with the consent of his suzerain was prepared and approved, and the great project began to emerge from the realm of pure speculation.⁵³

The plan in brief, as embodied in the Viceroy's Concession, provided for a company to be organized under the auspices of the Pasha and known as the *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez*. The directors of the Company were to be chosen by the Viceroy "from among those most interested in the enterprise," and the concession was to endure for 99 years. The canal works were to be executed at the cost of the Company, but all fortifications were to be installed by the Viceroy. The Egyptian

⁵⁰ De Lesseps, *op. cit.*, p. 7. The letters inserted in this English version by their author were undoubtedly edited rather carefully in order to give the book cohesion and consistency.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 13. Saïd gave his approval, however, only on condition that there should be no opposition on the part of the Great Powers. — F. O. 78/1156, F. W. A. Bruce to the Earl of Clarendon, 3 Dec., 1854.

⁵³ De Lesseps, *op. cit.*, p. 26. The text of the minute is given in J. Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 437-441.

Government was to receive 15% of the net profits of the Company, 75% of the profits were to be paid to the shareholders, and an additional 10% was reserved for the "founders." There was to be no discrimination among nations in tariff rates. The route of the canal was not specified, but the concession was purposely made inclusive, so that even the Nile might be used if considered advisable.⁵⁴

Shortly after the completion of the agreement, De Lesseps went, at the Pasha's request, to explain the arrangement to Frederick W. A. Bruce, who had succeeded C. A. Murray as British Consul-General. The Canal Company was presented, not as a French but as a strictly international enterprise having its origin in Egypt. The plan appeared to be largely free from those features which had made earlier French proposals anathema to the British Government. An international undertaking, in which France should participate no more than Great Britain or Austria, at first Bruce believed, or feigned to believe, to be an acceptable proposition. He replied, according to De Lesseps, that if free capital were involved in such a commercial enterprise, he could anticipate no opposition from England.⁵⁵ But he also pointed out that, as he had no instructions on the subject, his opinion carried no significance.

In reporting this conference and subsequent information to the Home Government, Bruce said that he had urged Saïd not to invest in or guarantee the canal in any way as it was much too large a matter for Egyptian resources. Instead of this, he again urged the completion of a railway line to Suez, "the money for which would have been found by the contractors of the line now nearly finished."⁵⁶ But regarding De Lesseps' scheme he continued, "I have reason to believe that this scheme has been brought forward by Mr. Lesseps without any communication with the French Government." He believed that such a direct canal as that proposed would "give Egypt the go-bye," and that it would have a constant tendency to escape from the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Government, and would in no way enrich the country except as it might create a demand for supplies. The railway, on the other hand, would follow the Nile and bring the route of trade through Egypt.

⁵⁴ F. O., Suez Canal Papers, 78/1156, *Traduction of Concession from Saïd Pasha to Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Transmitted to F. W. A. Bruce, Nov., 1854. The complete text of the Concession or *firman* in 12 Articles, is dated 30 Nov., 1854. — F. O. 78/1156, Enclosure, Lord Cowley to the Foreign Office, 18 June, 1855; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 422-424.

⁵⁵ De Lesseps, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵⁶ F. O. 78/1156, Bruce to Clarendon, 3 Dec., 1854.

It is a question well worth the attention and serious consideration of the Turkish Government [he said], and of those interested in maintaining the link between the East and the West in the hands of a neutral and unaggressive Power, how far these objects are compatible with the existence of a Powerful Company disposing the money and patronage which such an enterprise would place at their disposal.⁵⁷

That Bruce did not believe such an enterprise could be divorced from political considerations was also made clear. He believed that even if the French Government furnished no funds, it would probably back the canal in some way.

It is clear that before £8,000,000⁵⁸ could be found, the neutrality of the Passage must be guaranteed by some arrangement in the nature of a Treaty by the Great Powers . . . and in the course of the discussion many questions will arise with reference to the facility to be afforded by it for the Passage of Troops and Military Stores. It is not to be forgotten, moreover, that the first effect of it would be to open a direct Trade from Europe with the Red Sea, which would lead to the formation of Establishments on different points along its coast, and which in the present state of anarchy . . . of those countries, would in all probability lead to collision with the natives, and become the pretext for the employment of forcible measures and the formation of permanent settlements.⁵⁹

If the project had been launched without the knowledge of Napoleon III, he was not long in expressing a peculiar interest in it.⁶⁰ On December 22, the Viceroy of Egypt was invested with the insignia of the Legion of Honor by the French Consul-General, M. Sabatier, on behalf of the French Emperor. In making the presentation, M. Sabatier said, in part:

In conferring on your Highness this great distinction . . . Napoleon III . . . is . . . anxious to express his deep interest in Egypt itself, and in the glorious but arduous work of reorganization and reform bequeathed to your Highness

⁵⁷ F. O. 78/1156, Bruce, 3 Dec., 1854.

⁵⁸ This was Stephenson's estimate of the cost of the waterway.

⁵⁹ F. O. 78/1156, Bruce to Clarendon, 3 Dec., 1854. Bruce rather thought that the canal project would further the cause of the railway, however.

⁶⁰ Lord Cowley, British Ambassador to France, wrote to the Foreign Office about this time that the French Government officially denied having anything to do with the canal project.

by your father of illustrious memory. Your Highness is aware that in carrying out this work the encouragement and, if need be, the support of the Emperor will never fail you. . .”⁶¹

This alone would have sufficed to make the opponents of the Suez scheme wary. But already, on December 4, the Pasha had written to the Sultan asking his approval on both the canal and the railway from Cairo to Suez, intending to use the one as a counterpoise to the other. “I have been told that the question belonged to Paris and London,” wrote De Lesseps; “I think it ought not to leave Egypt until further orders.”⁶² But the question refused to stay in Egypt. The Pasha of Egypt was, after all, the vassal of the Sultan, and that fact alone inevitably would have led to the reviewing by the representatives of the Great Powers of any proposed measure which might affect the status of the Ottoman Empire, concerning which two great nations were then contending with a third. Thus, into the maelstrom of political intrigue already produced by the problems which war had been invoked to settle, problems for the most part relating to the protection of India, was interjected a related issue which could not fail of breeding difficulties between the Powers allied against Russia.

The British Government, in opposing the canal scheme, chose to defend its position at Constantinople. In this way official statements which might give umbrage to France could be avoided, the Turkish Government could be made to take the blame for the refusal to issue a *firman* authorizing a canal, and there also the situation would rest in the hands of a diplomat who would be fully capable of managing the situation. This last consideration was not one of the least. In Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Great Britain possessed an Ambassador of no uncertain type. Being vigorous and aggressive and well acquainted with the devious paths of Turkish diplomacy, he was so feared by the ministers surrounding the Sultan, both because of his domineering personality and his unhesitating willingness to invoke the vast powers of the government he represented, that his colleagues frequently spoke of him as “Sultan Stratford.”⁶³ He was, moreover, a most narrow-minded imperialist, whose hatred of Russia because of her real and supposed advances in the direction of India had largely been responsible for the opening of the Crimean War, and whose suspicion of French motives in connection with the

⁶¹ De Lesseps, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Suez Canal scheme took no note of the need for French coöperation in prosecuting the badly-managed Crimean campaign. Few suggestions from London were needed, therefore, to raise up at the Porte an insuperable obstacle to the further progress of the canal idea so long as the Turkish Government remained in awe of the imperious and temperamental British Ambassador.

One of the first definite indications of the position adopted by the British representative at the Porte was contained in a confidential despatch from the Grand Vizier, Reschid Pasha, to the Viceroy of Egypt in February, 1855. At the behest of the English Ambassador, Reschid dutifully pointed out the obvious advantages which a railroad would confer on Egypt and suggested that as a railroad would be much less expensive than a canal, and since two such enterprises would be inadvisable, the canal should be abandoned.⁶⁴ Almost at the same moment De Lesseps arrived at Constantinople in the capacity of a plenipotentiary from the Viceroy of Egypt to secure the consent of the Porte for the canal. He found the Grand Vizier apparently quite favorable to his project,⁶⁵ although the fear of the British Ambassador was so great among the members of the Turkish Council that De Lesseps was refused recognition in any official capacity.⁶⁶ The French *chargé d'affaires* at Constantinople, M. Benedetti, supported De Lesseps in his efforts as much as possible, but even he had received from his Government "a hint not to put himself too forward in the matter."⁶⁷ De Lesseps, therefore, found himself reduced to the necessity of using such personal influence as he had, supported officially only by the representative of the Austrian Government.⁶⁸

During the next few weeks De Lesseps labored hard to convert the Turkish Government to the canal undertaking, emphasizing the international character of the enterprise, its approval by France and Austria, and the anxiety of Saïd Pasha that it be recognized as his project. So sincere and untiring were his efforts that Lord Stratford reported to his Government on February 22, that the Turkish Council, including Reschid Pasha, were very much inclined to grant the request of the Pasha of Egypt, not that they believed in the canal itself, but because they disliked to give umbrage to the Viceroy and the French Government.⁶⁹ A

⁶⁴ F. O. 78/1156, Reschid Pasha to the Viceroy of Egypt, 11 Feb., 1855; Foreign Office to Stratford de Redcliffe, 27 Feb., 1855.

⁶⁵ De Lesseps quotes Reschid Pasha as saying that he would like to be rid of Lord Stratford's influence. — *The Suez Canal*, pp. 80, 97.

⁶⁶ F. O. 78/1156, Stratford de Redcliffe to Lord Clarendon, 12 Feb., 1855.

⁶⁷ De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, p. 81.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.

⁶⁹ F. O. 78/1156, Redcliffe to Clarendon, 22 Feb., 1856.

few days later Lord Stratford reported again that even if he should succeed in postponing the action of the Turkish Council, he believed the desired *firman* would be issued before long unless he (the Ambassador) could object to it on official grounds. Meanwhile, in order to relieve the pressure concentrating upon him, he prepared a memorandum for the Foreign Office, which was communicated orally to the Grand Vizier, stating —

It is quite clear that this scheme is founded on ulterior intentions hostile to British views and interests — and the [overt] . . . object no doubt is, to lay a foundation for a future severance of Egypt from Turkey and for placing it under French protection. A deep and wide canal interposed between Syria and Egypt, studded with fortifications, would be a military defensive line which, with the Desert in front of it, would render the march for a Turkish army very difficult; and if land is to be conceded to the French company, a French colony or French territory would be interposed between Turkey and Egypt, and any attempt of Turkish troops to cross that line would be held to be an invasion of France.

From the moment this enterprise was completed, Egypt would be virtually cut off from Turkey and would be placed under the protection of France.

It seems to me that these considerations might be frankly . . . explained to the French Government and they might be asked whether they think it worth while to endanger the alliance by pressing forward this scheme.⁷⁰

With these and other similar vigorous representations, which had the smell, if not the color, of official statements, De Lesseps was foiled in his hope of securing immediate action. Vainly he stated that he had no objection to the Suez Railway, and that since this would be constructed by Egyptian capital while the canal would be an international undertaking, the two enterprises need not conflict in the least. Likewise in vain did he memorialise the Grand Vizier, the Turkish Council, and even Lord Stratford de Redcliffe himself.⁷¹ The Turkish Ministers replied that in the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Memorandum of Stratford de Redcliffe, given to Mr. Chabert, and communicated orally to Reschid Pasha, [Enclosure with No. 148, 27 Feb., 1855]. Several of these arguments had already been suggested by the Consul-General in Egypt, Mr. F. W. A. Bruce. See F. O. 78/1156, Bruce to Clarendon, 20 Feb., 1855.

⁷¹ De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 86-87, 95-96; *Inquiry into the Opinions of the Commercial Classes of Great Britain on the Suez Ship Canal* (London, 1857), pp. 129-132, "Letter from De Lesseps to Stratford de Redcliffe, Pera, 28 Feb., 1855." Lord Stratford appears to have completely ignored this letter, which reviewed the whole case for the canal from a political point of view.

absence of details of the canal plan furnished by the Viceroy himself they were unable to take any official action on the matter, and they procrastinated further without committing themselves by appointing a commission to investigate the canal scheme.⁷² Finally, early in March, when it had become altogether obvious that the Porte dared not risk offending the British Government at such a critical moment by approving the canal project, De Lesseps took his departure for Egypt, angry and discouraged, but not beaten.⁷³ He had received intimations that the desired permit would not be long in forthcoming.

With all of his powers, Lord Stratford was in an uncomfortable position. Reschid Pasha very probably disliked as well as feared him, and he was none too securely seated in office. The whole Turkish Council were growing restive under the taunts showered upon them by the diplomats of other nations because of their subservience to the whims of the English "Sultan," who had no official instructions to cite for his continued opposition to De Lesseps and the canal.⁷⁴ But the anxiety of the Turkish ministers proceeded from another source, as well. Intimations came now and then of the desire of the Viceroy of Egypt to become independent and of the wish of the French Government to encourage such sentiments.⁷⁵ It was also suggested that the Pasha might authorize the construction of the canal on his own authority, basing his action on arguments advanced by British agents in 1851, when French opposition at Constantinople temporarily held up the consent of the Porte for the construction of the first section of the Egyptian Railway. It had been pointed out to the Viceroy at that time that the railway might well be considered a purely domestic matter, not requiring the approval of the Porte.⁷⁶

Lord Stratford grew fearful of his ability to carry on the tempering policy of the Porte much longer. Sincere in his belief, no doubt, that the canal project ranked with Russian conquests in Transcaucasia in its threat to British interests in the East, he begged with such grace as he could muster for permission to proclaim officially the sentiments of his Government. "It is only by an open official interference that I could hope to succeed in obtaining an indefinite postponement of the plan," he wrote on March 21.⁷⁷ Faced thus with the direct issue, the Foreign Office

⁷² F. O. 78/1156, Redcliffe to Clarendon, 1 March, 1855 (Confidential).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, No. 155, (Confidential); Redcliffe to F. W. A. Bruce, 26 March, 1855 (private); De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, p. 98.

⁷⁴ F. O. 78/1156, Governor-General of Egypt to Kiamil Pasha, 31 March, 1855. [Encl. in No. 280, 12 April.]

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, F. W. A. Bruce to Lord Clarendon, 18 Feb., 1855.

⁷⁶ De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 81-82.

⁷⁷ F. O. 78/1156, Redcliffe to the Foreign Office, 21 March, 1855.

tried another expedient. In response to Lord Stratford's memorandum and request for advice of February 26, he had been informed in a despatch dated March 9 that it was "the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that it would not be expedient to make any official protest against this scheme."⁷⁸ But a little later Lord Clarendon, in approving his machinations to prevent the success of De Lesseps' mission to Constantinople, added:

Her Majesty's Government consider that this canal would be useless even if it were possible to execute it, and the concession demanded by M. Lesseps is highly objectionable for political reasons: and they recommend the Porte not to grant it on the ground that this is not a moment for bringing so large a project into the money market.⁷⁹

Selections from this and other despatches in the same vein, "read confidentially" to Reschid Pasha, were about to cause a shelving of the canal question, when it was unexpectedly reopened. The French Government, repenting of its early moderation, suddenly came forward in active support of the enterprise. On May 21, the French *chargé d'affaires* at Constantinople formally demanded the sanction of the Suez concession on the ground that the Viceroy of Egypt had at last supplied all necessary details and the British Government had withdrawn its objections.⁸⁰ This was vigorously denied, both by Redcliffe at the moment and officially by the Foreign Office a short time later.⁸¹ But the incident at least had the effect of clearing the air and bringing out openly the views of the British and French Governments concerning it.

On June 4, Lord Cowley, British Ambassador at Paris, protested to the French Government against Benedetti's recent action in support of the canal at Constantinople. Benedetti's statements were immediately disavowed by Count Walewski, the French Foreign Minister, but the whole question of the canal came up for discussion. Walewski suggested that both Britain and France instruct their representatives at Constantinople to interfere no further in the matter, but to leave it for the decision of the Sultan and the Viceroy of Egypt. To this Cowley replied —

That his suggestion did not apply equally to both governments. I must maintain, I said, that in respect to the means

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Foreign Office to Redcliffe, 9 March, 1855.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Clarendon to Redcliffe, 29 March, 1855 (Confidential).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Redcliffe to Clarendon, 21 May, 1855 (Confidential); Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 261.

⁸¹ F. O. 78/1156, Foreign Office to Redcliffe, 21 May and 6 June, 1855.

of transit through Egypt, Her Majesty's Government was much more concerned in the final solution . . . than the French Government, and, as he must know, that Her Majesty's Government had no object in view with reference to Egypt but the rapid transmission of their correspondence to India.⁸²

Count Walewski insisted, however, that this suggestion be made to the British Foreign Office. Cowley duly transmitted the proposal, with his own comment that "unfortunately experience proves, even if your Lordship were inclined to accept this proposal, that no orders from the government at home will prevent French agents acting secretly, when they think that any advantage can be obtained over British interests."⁸³

The British Government demurred at giving a pledge to remain neutral on the canal question. In reply to the proposal of Count Walewski, Lord Clarendon took occasion to sum up the whole of British objections to the canal, which made a passive attitude on the part of the British Government very unlikely.

The objections of Her Majesty's Government to this scheme of a canal are threefold:

First — They know, whatever may be said by speculators to the contrary, that it is physically impossible, except at a cost which must put out of all question its being profitable as a commercial speculation, and which must therefore prove, that if undertaken, it can be undertaken only for political objects.

Secondly — This scheme, which in any case would require a long time for its execution, would interfere with and greatly delay, if not entirely prevent, the completion of a railway communication between Cairo and Suez, in connection with that already established between Alexandria and Cairo, and would thus be extremely injurious to our interests with reference to India.⁸⁴ All that the British Government want in Egypt is an easy and rapid road to India for travellers, light goods, and letters and despatches. They want no ascendancy, no territorial acquisition: they only want a thoroughfare; but a thoroughfare they must have, free and unmo-

⁸² F. O. 78/1156, Cowley to Clarendon, 4 June, 1855.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Cowley, 4 June, 1855.

⁸⁴ This argument was weak, considering the fact that the Viceroy of Egypt had already ordered the rails for the Suez section of the railway and had arranged for the work to proceed on the line regardless of the fate of the canal. — F. O. 78/1156, Cowley to the Foreign Office, 21 June, 1855.

lested: and the continuation of the railway would give them that thoroughfare rapid, while the continuation of the present political condition of Egypt as a dependency of the Turkish Empire gives them that thoroughfare free and secure.

The third objection to the canal scheme is that Her Majesty's Government cannot disguise from themselves that it is founded upon an antagonistic policy on the part of France with regard to Egypt, which they had hoped and believed had given way to the happy change which of late has taken place in the mutual relations of the two countries. . .

This canal scheme has survived the policy out of which it arose, and it ought to give way to the altered and better policy which now guides the course of the two Governments.⁸⁵

The correspondence between the two Governments continued during June and July without any agreement having been reached by argument. Count Persigny, the French Ambassador at the Court of St. James, after conferring with the Emperor Napoleon III late in June, quoted him as saying that whatever sentiment he had about the canal, he would not press the project over British opposition, and all interference would cease, although he did not want the Turks to think that English influence had made him back down.⁸⁶ This created such a good impression in London that the British Government also agreed to let the matter drop, it being tacitly understood that nothing would be done about the canal at all for the time being, and the subject was to be considered *non avenue*.⁸⁷

At this point the canal project, as a political issue, temporarily entered a quiescent state. The "gentlemen's agreement," together with the varying fortunes of the Crimean War, for the time being supplanted the canal in the councils of the allies. The

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Foreign Office to Lord Cowley, 18 June, 1855. This statement was undoubtedly inspired by Palmerston. When De Lesseps visited England and conferred with Lord Palmerston late in June, he was struck with the fact that the objections voiced by Palmerston were those which Clarendon had mentioned, "without omitting one." "It was evident," De Lesseps said, "that he himself [Palmerston] had dictated them, or that they had, at all events, been written at his direction."—De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, p. 148.

⁸⁶ F. O. 78/1156, Cowley to Clarendon, 30 June, 1855, (Confidential).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Foreign Office to Cowley, 2 and 18 July, 1855; De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, p. 133. De Lesseps understood this to mean that "it would be necessary . . . for the French Ambassador to abstain from using his *official* [italics mine] weight to influence the Porte in favour of the ratification, and for the English Ambassador, on his part, to abstain from demanding of the Porte any engagement contrary to the ratification."

canal idea, however, did not lapse. Its projectors, beginning a campaign of public education, profitably employed the following months in developing support among the merchant and scientific classes which would come in good stead in the trying days ahead.

The frequent declarations made by English authorities that the idea of a maritime canal across the Isthmus of Suez was fundamentally unsound and intrinsically impracticable, coupled with the unrelenting hostility of the entire diplomatic corps, caused De Lesseps to determine upon a new course of action. With implicit confidence that all reasonable persons must recognize the great advantages and entire feasibility of the canal, he undertook to carry his project over the obstacles raised by the English Government to the English people themselves, whose support he reckoned so essential to the eventual success of his scheme. Arriving in London at the end of June, 1855, he busied himself with interviewing members of the Government and representatives of the mercantile class. One of his earliest conversations was with Lord Palmerston, to whom he outlined his plan frankly and in detail, expecting an equally candid reply. In this he was not disappointed.

I must tell you frankly [said the Prime Minister] that what we are afraid of losing is our commercial and maritime pre-eminence, for this Canal will put other nations on an equal footing with us. At the same time I must own that we are not quite easy on the score of the designs of France. Of course we have every confidence in the loyalty and sincerity of the Emperor, but who can answer for those who will come after him? ⁸⁸

Lord Clarendon was no more sympathetic in his views. "I must tell you," he said, "that the traditions of our Government are opposed to the idea of a Canal across the Isthmus. And since I have gone into the question, I confess that my own ideas are unfavorable." ⁸⁹

These cold-blooded responses were discouraging enough, but they were considerably atoned for by the enthusiasm displayed elsewhere for the canal idea. De Lesseps' *The Isthmus of Suez Question*,⁹⁰ issued at this time reviewing the advantages to be derived by English commerce from the executing of his project, was

⁸⁸ Quoted in Percy Fitzgerald, *The Great Canal at Suez*, I, 53.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 53-54.

⁹⁰ London; Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1855.

well received, as was the prospectus of the proposed Company. The East India Company issued a statement through Mr. J. C. Melville, its Secretary, that " . . . the Court [of Directors] must always feel a deep interest in the success of any undertaking that would facilitate the means of communication between this country and India." And the Peninsular and Oriental Company, who had favored the project from the first, so far ignored the attitude of the Foreign Office as to say that " the importance of the results that would attend the junction of the Mediterranean and Red Seas by a navigable canal is . . . so potent, that no second opinion can exist in the matter; and should the project be carried to a successful issue, this company must of necessity participate in the effect it will produce not only upon the commerce of this country, but of the whole world." ⁹¹ Opinion in India also was generally favorable to the canal. The *Calcutta Review*, representing current opinion in the eastern mercantile centers, said, " The more the mind reflects upon the true import of this grand undertaking, the more vast and comprehensive do its advantages appear." ⁹²

While this visit to England sowed seeds on fertile soil, it availed nothing toward lifting the weight of English official opposition. Upon his return to Paris in August, De Lesseps rapidly completed arrangements for another measure designed to convince doubtful minds as to the feasibility of the maritime canal from an engineering point of view. This was the convening at Paris of noted engineers from all the principal countries of western Europe, who, acting in concert as an International Scientific Commission, were to pass final judgment on the practicability of a sea-level canal and to estimate its cost. De Lesseps selected as members of this important body two Englishmen, McLean and Rendel; Conrad, an expert on the dike system of Holland; Negrelli, Director of Public Works in Austria, who had been a member of the isthmian survey of 1847, and others appointed by the Governments of Piedmont, Prussia, and Austria. ⁹³

After a brief and sympathetic consideration of the problem, the Commission selected a sub-committee of five members to carry out a new and thorough survey of the Isthmus of Suez. This group proceeded at once to Egypt, where the Viceroy gave them every facility for executing their work as promptly as possible. The survey was completed early in January, 1856, although the

⁹¹ Ferdinand de Lesseps, *Inquiry into the Opinions of the Commercial Classes of Great Britain*, pp. 2, 3; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 54.

⁹² *Calcutta Review*, XXIV, 341-342.

⁹³ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 264-265; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 56.

final report was not published until about a year afterward.⁹⁴ It was again conclusively shown that no essential difference in levels existed between the Mediterranean and Red Seas; that fresh water could be found at many points along the proposed route of the canal; that the excavation of the canal would be easy; and that no material obstacles existed to the construction of ports and docking facilities at Suez or at the end terminating near Pelusium on the Mediterranean. A direct rather than an indirect track between the two seas was advocated, and the idea of a canal utilising the Nile was definitely discarded. It was shown that the oft-expressed fears of "arm chair engineers" that the mouths of the canal would soon silt up and that the channel itself would be filled by blowing sand were groundless. It was considered that no "sluices" or locks would be required in constructing the channel in order to prevent it from becoming a "stinking ditch." The expense of construction was estimated at £6,000,000, a much smaller sum than the minimum estimate prepared earlier by Robert Stephenson.⁹⁵

Even this report, however, did not suffice to silence doubtful critics in England, who continued in the face of unbiased and indisputable scientific evidence to cry out against the impossibility of executing the great work at any figures which would admit of profitable returns.⁹⁶ The argument was even advanced in the *Edinburgh Review*, which was generally viewed as a mouthpiece of Lord Palmerston, that the canal would save little either of time or expense in the Anglo-Indian passage.⁹⁷

As the English shareholders will inevitably find the route round the Cape is infinitely preferable for commercial purposes [said the *Review*], we may rest assured that the Canal will never be executed; or, if it were opened, it would, as in ancient times, soon be closed again, as it could never pay its working expenses. . . . At present the people of England are

⁹⁴ See *Report and Plan of the International Scientific Commission; with Appendix containing the latest official documents* (London, 1857); Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 268, 445-446.

⁹⁵ *Report and Plan of the International Scientific Commission*, pp. 39-114; De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 220-221; Robert Stephenson, *The Isthmus of Suez Canal* (London, 1858).

⁹⁶ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 270-271. McLean, the English engineer attached to the International Commission, did not agree with his colleagues on several points, for instance, as regarded the practicability of a sea-level canal without locks. Lord Clarendon was told that the report "was worded in a manner which enabled him to sign it." — F. O., 78/1340, John Green to Lord Clarendon, 4 Jan., 1856.

⁹⁷ A despatch from the Foreign Office on 10 September spoke of the canal as being "well treated" in this issue. — F. O. 78/1340, Clarendon to Bruce, 10 Sept., 1856.

interested in the completion of the Railroad through Egypt and not the Canal.⁹⁸

While members of the English Government were refusing to be convinced by the report of the International Commission, Saïd Pasha found in it sufficient warrant for issuing a new and revised concession for the proposed Canal Company. This document, dated January 5, 1856, had particular reference to the cutting of a sea-level canal by the route recommended by the International Commission. Some of its provisions, however, were designed to calm the real or feigned fears of Great Britain. Four-fifths of all workmen employed were to be Egyptians. Lands granted to the Canal Company either for temporary or permanent use were to remain under Egyptian sovereignty. And it was specified that the canal with its ports "shall always remain open as a neutral passage to every merchant ship without preference," upon the payment of dues.⁹⁹ This was the basis on which the Company was presently brought into actual existence.

In January, 1856, soon after the report of the Suez Canal Commission had become known in London, Lord Clarendon urged Lord Stratford de Redcliffe again to point out to the Sultan the likelihood of the detachment of Egypt from the Turkish Empire in case the canal were to be constructed. With regard to the enthusiasm of the Viceroy for De Lesseps' plan, Clarendon said, "The urgency of the Pasha is sufficiently intelligible upon these grounds."¹⁰⁰ Thus encouraged, Lord Stratford, with great satisfaction continued his notoriously hostile tactics at Constantinople, while Bruce in Egypt was bringing as much pressure as he could muster to bear on the Viceroy.¹⁰¹

About the same time the agent of the Red Sea and India Telegraph Company, Lionel Gisborne, was in Egypt for the purpose of securing permission for the erection of land wires between Alexandria and Suez by way of Aden to Bombay. Although

⁹⁸ *Edinburgh Review*, CIII, 236-265. See the able refutation of this article by M. Barthelmy St. Hilaire, *New Facts and Figures Relative to the Isthmus of Suez Canal*. (Ed. by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps), (London, 1856), pp. 34, 35, 88 ff. The English corvette *Tartarus* under Capt. Mansell, was despatched to verify the soundings in the Bay of Pelusium reported by the International Scientific Commission. The findings of this independent survey practically coincided with those reported by the Commission, though they were made to appear unfavorable. — F. O. 78/1340, Bruce to Clarendon, 21 July, 1856.

⁹⁹ St. Hilaire, *New Facts and Figures*, pp. 181-190; De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, p. 233.

¹⁰⁰ F. O. 78/1340, Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, 21 Jan., 1856.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, John Green to Lord Clarendon, 4 Jan.; *ibid.*, Bruce to Clarendon, 4 March, 21 July, 1856.

strongly supported in his suit by Consul-General Bruce, Gibsorne was baffled by the procrastination of Egyptian Ministers and their scarcely veiled reluctance to give consideration to any British commercial undertaking in view of the obstructionist tactics of British authorities with regard to the Suez Canal. Still hoping to create a friendly attitude in England, De Lesseps recommended to the Viceroy that the matter be disposed of promptly. The latter thereupon gave plenipotentiary powers to De Lesseps for arranging the terms of the concession, and the necessary document was soon completed, to the satisfaction of English interests and the credit of the canal projector.¹⁰²

The close of the Crimean War early in 1856, far from producing any greater degree of unanimity among the British, French and Turkish Governments, had a tendency to encourage British diplomats to ignore the tacit agreement made with the Emperor Napoleon late in 1855 and to revive the canal as an open political issue. All of De Lesseps' efforts to have the canal question reviewed by the representatives of the Powers assembled at Paris in February and March for the purpose of preparing a general peace treaty were unavailing. These diplomats even refused to insert a clause into the Treaty of Paris guaranteeing the perpetual neutrality of any maritime canal which might in future be constructed across the Isthmus of Suez.¹⁰³ One of the Turkish Ministers present also declared himself altogether opposed to the canal.¹⁰⁴

In April De Lesseps made another visit to England to attempt to arrive at an understanding with the Foreign Office. Again he conferred with Lord Palmerston. "I found Lord Palmerston just as he was in 1840," he wrote, "defiant and prejudiced against France and Egypt."¹⁰⁵ Conferences with Lord Clarendon, Prince Albert, the Queen and others were no more productive than that with Lord Palmerston.

Meanwhile, reports from Constantinople and Egypt alarmed De Lesseps, and caused his early return to the first scene of his labors. English and Turkish intrigues were making great headway in poisoning the mind even of the Viceroy against the canal scheme. Utterly weary of opposition and defeat, foiled on every

¹⁰² De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 238, 239. De Lesseps could rightly take pride in recording in this connection, "I have used all means in my power to promote the liberal principle of free telegraphic communication between England and its eastern possessions across Egyptian territory."

¹⁰³ De Lesseps, *op. cit.*, p. 233; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 72.

¹⁰⁴ F. O. 78/1340, Cowley to Clarendon, 3 April, 1856.

¹⁰⁵ De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 256-257.

hand, and with the Turkish officers of his own troops displaying mutinous signs, Saïd was nearly ready to give over the whole canal enterprise for the sake of safety and peace.¹⁰⁶ Upon learning of these dangerous symptoms, De Lesseps tarried only long enough in Paris before his return to Egypt to prepare a memorandum for the Emperor. In this he called Napoleon's attention to the "gentlemen's agreement" of the previous year which had been so flagrantly broken by the British Government.

Up to this time [he said] Lord Stratford has never ceased to make use of his influence to inspire the Ministers of the Porte with prejudices against the plan of cutting through the Isthmus of Suez and to prevent the ratification of the grant regularly and legally made by the Viceroy of Egypt.

It is, moreover, certain that the English agent in Egypt has endeavoured to influence the Viceroy with a view to dissuading him from a project which excites the warmest sympathy in France as well as in the rest of Europe. . . . The Turks, placed between the powerful threats of Lord Stratford and the scrupulous silence which our Ambassador has been ordered to maintain, are naturally changing their attitude, and testifying feelings hostile to the Canal, to which they were at first favourable.¹⁰⁷

At this point, De Lesseps disclosed a new and powerful factor in the critical state of canal negotiations when he pointed out the recent formation of "an English Company, which is to have a grant for the construction of a railway, 350 leagues in length, from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. . . . This railway, the surveys for which are not yet commenced, is today quoted at a premium in the London money market."¹⁰⁸

Here was the clue to the canal's sudden loss of prestige, to the defection of its Turkish friends, and to the arrogant confidence of the British Foreign Office in refusing longer even a neutral attitude toward the Maritime Canal Company. The Egyptian Railway had served to counter-balance the Suez Canal idea for a time, and French hostility to the railway justified British intolerance of a navigable waterway. Even while the railway, once approved by the Porte, was in building, it was steadily maintained that with the completion of the line the canal would have no additional advantages to offer. But by the close of 1856 the rail-

¹⁰⁶ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 79.

¹⁰⁷ De Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 290-291.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

way line between Alexandria and Cairo had been in use for a considerable time and the road from Cairo to Suez was well across the desert. Yet sentiment in Europe in favor of a canal was stronger than ever. The Egyptian Railway had served its purpose as a political pawn. But to take its place, a far more formidable scheme had arisen. It was now proposed to connect the Mediterranean coast with the Persian Gulf, which was adjacent to India, with a line of railway which would speed up communication far beyond the possibilities either of an Egyptian Railway or a Suez Canal. At the same time the limitless resources of Mesopotamia, a potential granary, were to be developed. The novelty, daring, and apparent reasonableness of this scheme were depended upon to capture the popular imagination as the Suez Canal idea had, and in this the projectors were not disappointed.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EUPHRATES VALLEY RAILWAY

THE settlement of the Turco-Egyptian problem in 1841, closely following the official opening of the overland route through Egypt, brought an end to contemporary English plans for developing a land and water line from Syria through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf. For nearly fifteen years thereafter political conditions in the Near East were in a state of relative quiescence, and with Russia and France intent on other matters and Persia, Turkey, and Egypt engaged in no more than the usual intrigues, little alarm was felt for the safety of the Indian approaches. The overland route meanwhile functioned well and supplied a convenient road not merely to India but to the whole of the East. The line through Syria and Mesopotamia, which had long since come to be regarded as a possible alternative route, pointed to India alone and was not capable of practical development by any known means. It was, in consequence, almost entirely neglected during these years.

However, the issues inherent in the peculiar combination of races, geographic influences, and national interests in the Near and Middle East were merely dormant during this interval and only awaited a favorable opportunity for cropping out in virulent form. Soon after 1850 major difficulties arose both in Turkey and in Persia, and as each had a distinct political bearing on the security of India, a new interest suddenly awoke in England and the Indian Presidencies in the strategic Mesopotamian route to India. A sketch of some of the fundamental problems involved will throw considerable light on the first and most promising of the several projects for a Euphrates Valley Railway, which served as a parade ground for imperialists and a pawn for statesmen from time to time after 1850.

The aggressions and jealousies which culminated in the Crimean War had much to do with the rise of plans for a British-owned Mesopotamian railway. The first incidents which led to this use-

less war were local and more or less obscure. They were much like the dissensions among the various sects in Syria — Mohammedans, Jews, Greek and Roman Catholics — which had often risen before. It was the appeal of the two groups of Christians to their natural protectors, Russia and France respectively, which paved the way for an extension of trouble.¹

The Powers chiefly concerned for one reason or another were not averse from taking sides. France, under Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, soon to become Napoleon III, was particularly eager for a show of strength. Despite the Emperor's protestations that he stood for peace, his neighbors were neither surprised nor entirely unprepared when his imperialism introduced a new tension into diplomatic relations. As the shrewd Charles Greville confided to his *Memoirs* in 1853, "It is difficult to make out what the French are at; with all our intimacy, we must keep on our guard against all contingencies on the part of our imperial neighbor."²

Tsar Nicholas welcomed the hostilities among the sects in Turkey as an evidence that the Ottoman Empire would be unable to survive much longer. As early as 1844 he had referred to the Sultan in a conference with Lord Aberdeen as a "sick man," and had made tentative overtures for a partition of his territorial effects upon the demise of the invalid. The suggestion had fallen on sterile ground. A similar proposal made to the British Ambassador in 1853 was given no cordial reception because of the knowledge that Nicholas was already preparing to take aggressive steps against Turkey. Britain had learned the lesson taught by the Triple Alliance of 1827. There was not to be a second Navarino.

At first the English Government anticipated no dangerous outgrowths from the religious discord in Turkey. Two aggravating elements, however, soon transformed a minor quarrel into a major crisis. One of these was the hatred of the British Ambassador at the Porte, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, for Russia. The other was the design of Napoleon III, who had already conceived a deep dislike for the Tsar, and who saw in the delicately balanced Eastern Question an opportunity to make political capital both at home and abroad. It was natural, therefore, that when Napoleon came forward as the champion of all the Roman Catholic Christians in Syria and Palestine and was so recognized by the Turkish Government, Nicholas at once insisted on the recognition of his position as protector of all Greek Christians. The Turkish

¹ W. Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors, 1801-1922*, pp. 199 ff.

² *The Greville Memoirs* (8 vols., London, 1898), VII, 103. See Spencer Walpole, *The Life of Lord John Russell* (2 vols., London, 1889), II, 176-177; Hon. E. Ashley, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston* (2 vols., London, 1876), II, 6.

Council, dominated by Lord Stratford, who acted throughout the crisis quite independently of instructions from the Foreign Office, refused the Russian demand. Mediatory efforts of Great Britain, Austria and Prussia were unavailing. Secure in the confidence that Britain and France would not permit a despoiling of Ottoman territory, and not averse from a war with the traditional enemy, the Turks were gleeful when Russian forces crossed the Pruth into their Danubian provinces in November, 1853.

Events marched rapidly on. Foiled by Turkish stamina in their plan of reaching Constantinople quickly by land, the Russians attacked and quickly destroyed the Turkish fleet at Sinope, thus opening up a road by sea. The "massacre" of Sinope proved to be a boomerang for Russia as Navarino had been for Great Britain. The British Cabinet, already wavering, could no longer remain neutral. A political *coup* by Lord Palmerston in December, 1853, committed the British Government to intervention.³ An alliance with France was concluded early in 1854, and the Crimean War was formally opened. Austria and Prussia, each of whom apparently had as much, or more, cause to oppose Russia by force of arms, remained neutral — an indication that the oriental elements in the outbreak of the war were more potent than the occidental.

The action of Great Britain in resorting to arms against Russia was a surprise to both friends and enemies. The British case was less obvious even than that of the French, but it was more fundamental. This is suggested by the fact that Britain was willing to make common cause with a Power commonly looked upon as a dangerous rival, if not an enemy. Even suspicions of bad faith on the part of this ally during the war⁴ and the evacuation of the Danubian principalities by Russian forces failed to lead to a negotiated peace in March, 1855, when there appeared to be no adequate reason for protracting hostilities. The explanation lies in the fact that the theme pervading this whole unfortunate struggle was Asiatic, not European. It mattered little to Great Britain whether the war was conducted in the Balkan Peninsula or on the shores of the Black Sea. The object was to relieve the long-accumulating pressure on Turkey and to check the progress of Russian arms towards the Persian Gulf and the frontiers of

³ B. K. Martin, "The Resignation of Lord Palmerston in 1853 . . ." in *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, I, 107-112; also his *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston* (New York, 1924), pp. 166-183.

⁴ L. J. Jennings (Ed.), *The Correspondence and Diaries of John Wilson Croker* (2 vols., London, 1884), I, 498-505; Stanley Lane-Poole (Ed.), *Life of Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe* . . . (2 vols., London, 1888), II, 302, 308; *The Greville Memoirs*, VII, 139.

India. It was the same general theme as had pervaded Near Eastern politics, with few intermissions, from 1826 to 1841. The passage to the East must be safeguarded. This fundamental feature of the war was not generally comprehended in England at the time, but it was no less fundamental for all that.

That the underlying concern of Great Britain was to be found in routes to the East is further indicated by the change in attitude toward both Russia and France at the close of the war. Russia, having been checked in her conquests for the time being, was no longer a source of great concern. The Persian key-fortress, Kars, which had been seized by the Russians in November, 1855, had been restored, and Russia had given up her claims to the protection of Greek Christians in Turkey. The Turkish Empire had been strengthened by small additions of territory at Russian expense, and further fortified by being admitted to the European family of states by the Paris Congress. The Russian peril had at least temporarily subsided.⁵

France, on the other hand, emerged from the war a strong Mediterranean Power with a distinct appetite for intervention in the East. Some of the British feeling of suspicion and hostility lately directed at Russia therefore came to focus on the late ally, whose motives and purposes none could fathom.⁶ The Mediterranean as a French lake with French influence entrenched on its eastern shores was scarcely preferable to Russian arms in the Danubian principalities or south of the Caucasus. All due precautions were taken, therefore, to safeguard British interests in the Mediterranean as long as the French had large forces which might be used for some ambitious project in the eastern Mediterranean.⁷ At the close of the Crimean War, Lord Clarendon, Foreign Secretary, wrote to Lord Panmure, Secretary for War —

You cannot too soon, although in an unostentatious way, put Malta in a complete state of defence, and Gibraltar too. It will be easy as well as natural, to deposit at those places the guns, so necessary for their defence, that you will be bringing home from the Crimea.⁸

A little later, instructions couched in similar vein were sent from the War Office to Admiral Codrington, who was assisting

⁵ T. E. Holland, *The European Concert in the Eastern Question* (Oxford, 1885), pp. 245-246.

⁶ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, II, 418-421, 433; *The Greville Memoirs*, VII, 229.

⁷ Ashley, *op. cit.*, II, 125.

⁸ Sir George Douglas and Sir George Ramsay (Eds.), *The Panmure Papers* (2 vols., London, 1908), II, 167, 175, 194.

in the evacuation of forces from the Crimea. With these preparations going on in the Mediterranean, it was natural for the British Government to display an active interest in any feasible plan for riveting British domination on those parts of Asia which were objects of so much solicitude and which had already in indirect ways caused the expenditure of so much blood and treasure.

During these years British troubles were not confined to the situation in Turkey. Conditions in Persia, never very satisfactory, had rapidly become critical with the revival of the Herat question. In 1851 the Persian Government undertook to reassert its claim of sovereignty over the little mountain state so strategically situated with reference to the frontiers of India. The British Government objected to this purpose, because —

. . . So long as Herat remains under Afghan domination, Her Majesty's Government can at its discretion appoint an Agent or Consul to reside in that city. But as soon as it becomes recognized as an integral portion of the Persian dominions, this power ceases, and is transferred to the Persian Government, which would then enjoy unfettered liberty for the diffusion of its name throughout Afghanistan and other countries adjacent to Herat.⁹

The Persians insisted that they had no sinister designs on the fortress state, but merely desired a recognition of Persia's ancient political rights.¹⁰ The British Government, however, believed that a formal engagement regulating Persian rights of intervention in the affairs of Herat might prevent future misunderstandings, and after a series of negotiations extending for more than a year a treaty was drawn up between Britain and Persia whereby the latter was not to send troops into Herat unless that state was attacked from without.¹¹ This action of Great Britain left a legacy of dislike in Persia which brought complications shortly afterward.

After the breach of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Russia, the latter sent an envoy to the Persian Court to suggest that the moment was opportune for a joint Russo-Persian attack on Turkey. In case of successful operations, Persia was to retain what she had taken or to give it back upon indemnification,

⁹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, XLV, 642 f.; Sir John Sheil to Lord Palmerston, 29 Dec., 1851.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 661-727.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 727-731, "Engagement of the Persian Government regarding Herat," 25 Jan., 1853. See C. U. Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds*, VII, 71.

and in any event the remainder of the Persian indemnity to Russia, dating from the Treaty of Turkmanshah, was to be remitted. After some hesitation, the Persian authorities found this prospect too attractive to resist, especially since no counter proposition could be expected from Great Britain as compensation for Persian neutrality. In consequence of these developments, the British minister to Persia suffered grave indignities, and toward the end of 1855 he broke off diplomatic relations and left Teheran.¹²

The failure of the British, who were preoccupied with the Russian war, immediately to follow up the Persian situation, gave rise to the typically oriental conclusion that Great Britain had been out-manœuvred and had retired from the scene. The moment seemed propitious for tearing up the humiliating treaty of 1853. Hence, in the early months of 1856 a Persian army invaded the territory of Herat and marched to attack the fortress-city. A position so strong could not be taken readily, and it was only after a siege of several months and the able services of a French engineer that the place capitulated in October.¹³

A position so commanding could not safely be left in possession of a state associated with Russia, and a British offensive was mandatory. The first step was to arrange a treaty of alliance with Dost Mohammed, Amir of Afghanistan, providing for a joint campaign against Persia.¹⁴ This done, a declaration of war on Persia was issued, and a plan of campaign mapped out which might accomplish its aim without proving too burdensome.¹⁵ From the British bases in India, Persia was most vulnerable in her southern seaports. A combined military and naval force, operating from Kurrachee, first attacked and took the island of Karrack, covering the landing of a military force near the important port of Bushire. This town having been captured, a swift campaign was made into the interior, followed by an ascent of the Karun River by a fleet of gunboats and transports. This continued as far as Ahwaz, which was captured after a brief but interesting engagement.¹⁶

Already the Persian Government had tired of the unprofitable war and had sued for peace. The final terms of the treaty, drawn up in Paris, were much more generous than the Persians had any

¹² *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XLVII, 94-281.

¹³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1857-1858, No. 70, p. 8.

¹⁴ Sir Percy Sykes, *History of Persia*, II, 349. This treaty was subsidiary to one of perpetual peace and friendship negotiated by Sir John Lawrence in 1855, not a slight accomplishment in itself.

¹⁵ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XLVII, 282 ff.

¹⁶ See Lieut.-Gen. Sir James Outram's *Persian Campaign in 1857*; . . . also, selections from his correspondence as Commander-in-chief and Plenipotentiary . . . (London, priv. pr., 1860); George Dodd, *The History of the Indian Revolt and of the Expeditions to Persia, China and Japan* (London, 1859).

reason to hope for.¹⁷ The Shah promised entirely to withdraw his forces from Herat and to recognize the complete independence of the Afghan state. Great Britain was to exercise the office of mediator in case of any future trouble between the two countries. Other than these agreements and a few apologies, the Persians came off scot free, which led to better Anglo-Persian relations for several years subsequently than had existed for a long time. Not the least of the virtues of the treaty was its conclusion in time for the return of British forces to India during the earliest stages of the Mutiny.

The Russian alliance with Persia, the attack on Herat, and the need of placing a British force quickly on Persian soil all contributed materially to a study of ways and means of reducing distances between England and India, and particularly to a consideration of lines extending from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. Any such line would have a far greater political value than that through Egypt. It would tend to neutralize French influence in Egypt and in Syria, and would forestall Russia in her design of reaching the Persian Gulf. These, besides its numerous claims to prominence on grounds of economic possibilities and advantages as a route for mail and passenger transportation, gave it an important, even if brief, place in the limelight.

The project of constructing a Euphrates Valley Railway grew out of much the same kind of considerations as those which produced the original Euphrates Expedition. Although the failure of the Euphrates Expedition and subsequent investigations of the Euphrates River had stopped all plans for the use of this passage while river steamers were the only means of establishing regular transit, the steady improvement of the steam locomotive and the success of various long lines of railway in other countries seemed to warrant new consideration of a route which appeared to be so well and in so many respects adapted by nature for a great highway. In fact, interest in this route had never entirely ceased since the attempt to develop it as a water route to supplement or supplant the Red Sea passage.¹⁸ Although the Euphrates Expedition did not find the rivers of Mesopotamia suited for regular steam communication and transportation, it did disclose the great commercial possibilities of Mesopotamia and the level and unbroken

¹⁷ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XLVII, 42. Lord Palmerston is quoted as saying, "The Persian Expedition was most successful, the victories gained by it very brilliant, and the political results highly important." — *The Panmure Papers*, II, 470.

¹⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., III, 77-82, "On the Practicability of Advancing an Army from Europe into Asia by the Province of the Euphrates and Tigris," by Dr. J. W. Winchester.

valley leading from the mountains of Syria to the head of the Persian Gulf. Fertile minds had already caught visions of the many advantages to be derived from an opening of this region by steam railway instead of by steamer¹⁹ while political and financial difficulties were yet too great to be overcome.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the vogue of railway building was in full blast. The steam locomotive had caught the popular fancy. Railways were then expected to inaugurate a new era of communication, as much more rapid than the steamboat as that had been superior to the canal barge and the stage coach. At this time when considerable distances were actually being bridged by railway lines in England, on the continent of Europe, and in India, the first tangible step was taken toward investigating the possibility of building a great trunk line from the English Channel or North Sea to Constantinople, from Scutari to Basrah, and from the Persian Gulf to India.

The first ambitious but untimely project was brought forward by an Anglo-Indian engineer, Rowland Macdonald Stephenson, the Managing Director of the East Indian Railway Company.²⁰ For years he had dreamed of constructing a "World's Highway" which might one day extend from western Europe to the shores of eastern Asia. He first obtained the opinions of men who had long represented the British Government in parts of Central Asia, among them Sir John McNeill, Col. L. Hennell and Col. Justin Sheil, concerning the possibility of constructing a railway line through Persia and Baluchistan. All reported as believing it possible, though they appeared doubtful of its practicability.²¹ Next, in 1850, Stephenson made a kind of path-finding tour through Europe. Armed with credentials and letters of introduction from Lord Palmerston, he presented his project to the heads of the governments of practically all of the European states through which such a line as he proposed might run. Most of the replies to his queries were favorable; some were skeptical; while the attitude of the French, who wished nothing to interfere with the line between Calais and Marseilles, was decidedly hostile.²²

Many objections appeared to the idea of attempting the construction of a railway line through Europe under the auspices of a single company. Already several of the European countries

¹⁹ *Calcutta Review*, XXV, 145; Capt. William Allen, *The Dead Sea, a New Route to India* (London, 1855).

²⁰ *Calcutta Review*, XXV, 145, 151.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-154. While Sir John McNeill showed little enthusiasm for Stephenson's plan, it is quite possible that this influenced him in supporting another Euphrates Valley Railway project a few years later.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173.

were developing railway systems of their own which within a few years promised to furnish a continuous passage from the English Channel to the frontiers of European Turkey. But the outbreak of the Crimean War, and the nature of the relations of France, Turkey, and Russia with Great Britain, encouraged the projector to revive his proposal in modified form.

On March 31, 1855, he wrote to Palmerston that he believed the time ripe for a reconsideration of an international railway line, since European lines were almost complete from the English Channel to the Danube, and those in India were rapidly pushing forward.²³ The sections of a through railway not already provided for were those through the Turkish Empire. He considered the time very favorable for obtaining from the Sultan a concession which would enable a private company to complete the railways which would link up those of East and West. Such a road, he believed, connecting the European lines with those of India at Bombay by a route through European and Asiatic Turkey and Persia, would be of great value to all of the countries traversed. It would, he was convinced, "secure the means of proceeding from London to and from all parts of India within a period of one week, and at a cost of less than half what is now paid for a 6 weeks' or 4 months' passage."²⁴

Palmerston did not find it advisable to encourage this project, partly because of the danger of further complicating the delicate European situation and partly because of the fact that other plans were in the making which promised equal advantages and involving no such extensive political problems. This ancestral form of the German *Bagdadbahn* idea was therefore suffered to pass from the scene, although it had the support of the Government of India, which, at Lord Dalhousie's instance, had agreed to "assist in surveys and otherwise as far as authority and funds permit."²⁵

Other suggestions for developing an alternative route through Mesopotamia meanwhile came both from individual and corporate sources.²⁶ A rather highly developed project was brought forward in 1854 for developing the existing trade through Syria to Mesopotamia, Persia, and India. The political and strategic value of

²³ Edward Davidson, *The Railways of India, with an Account of their Rise, Progress and Construction* . . . (London, 1868), pp. 144-153.

²⁴ *Calcutta Review*, XXV, 173-174.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175 — Letter from the Government of India to R. M. Stephenson, 30 Jan., 1856.

²⁶ Lanc-Poole (Ed.), *Life of Chesney*, pp. 383, 412, 424. Chesney claimed to be the first to propose a Euphrates Valley railway as he had claimed to be the pioneer in proposing other means of developing both this and the Suez route earlier.

such a line was urged in an application to the Foreign Office for pecuniary support and diplomatic assistance.²⁷ None of these schemes was given countenance by the Foreign Office.

Plans for a railway through Mesopotamia were not confined to the English world, however. A French company made overtures to the Ottoman Government about the time of the outbreak of the Crimean War, soliciting a concession and certain guarantees for a Mesopotamian railway to be built under French auspices. Because of the rivalry which had already developed between France and Britain over the Suez Canal, this project made little headway toward securing a *firman* authorizing the road.²⁸ But the concentrating of attention in the Near East in connection with the advance of Russia and the Crimean War, coupled with the several plans and suggestions for a railroad between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, could hardly fail to appeal to both statesmen and influential promoters for securing favorable terms from the Turks.

It secures once and for ever the independence of the Sultan [said the *Calcutta Review*]. No power will endure to see the charge of the Highway of the world pass into the hands of any but a second-rate potentate. That Russia will resist we cannot hesitate to believe. . . . It is therefore doubly necessary to seize a time when her resistance will avail nothing, will be rather a sound and valid reason for proceeding rapidly with the undertaking. . . . When the first locomotive from Calcutta reaches Calais, the freedom of Europe from the Cossacks will have been secured.²⁹

By the time these considerations, together with the forward state of Suez Canal plans, had led the British Government to smile upon any such undertaking as a railway through Asiatic Turkey, a new proposition was ready at hand fully adapted to the needs of the situation.

At the close of the Crimean War, a railway authority of some repute, Mr. (later Sir) William Patrick Andrew, Chairman of the Scinde, Punjab, and Delhi Railways, came forward to advocate a "direct route" between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. His primary object in promoting the scheme was to bring about the construction of a line which might eventually be linked up with the railway system he was constructing in India, thus providing an all-rail communication between all parts of

²⁷ *Life of Chesney*, p. 423.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425.

²⁹ *Calcutta Review*, XXV, 160-161.

India and Europe.⁸⁰ The schemes which had previously been suggested by Col. Chesney, Dr. James B. Thompson, R. M. Stephenson,⁸¹ and others all served to convince Andrew of the practicability of building a direct line through the Euphrates Valley, and being a business man and promoter rather than a diplomat or an engineer, he proceeded to approach a number of interested persons with a scheme for a railway company to carry out the project.

The move took shape with the formation early in 1856 of an Association for the Promotion of the Euphrates Valley, which soon issued a prospectus for a Euphrates Valley Railway.⁸² The plan as worked out by the Association proposed —

. . . To connect the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf by a railway from the ancient port of Seleucia by Antioch and Aleppo, to Ja'ber Castle on the Euphrates, of 80 miles in length, and afterwards from thence to Hit, and other towns, to Bagdad, and on to Kurnah, at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, or Bussorah, at the head of the Persian Gulf. Thence by steamers, communication will be established with all parts of India. . .

It is only proposed at present to execute the first section, about 80 miles of rail road, from the ancient port of Seleucia to Ja'ber Castle . . . below which point, the navigation of the river is permanently open for steamers of light draught and the boats of the country for 715 miles to Bussorah. . .⁸³

On the pamphlets and prospectuses issued by the new Association, the advantages of the proposed road were made to appear very considerable. It was maintained that this "short cut,"⁸⁴ which when completed to the Persian Gulf would comprise some 900 miles of railway, would shorten the passage to India by nearly 1000 miles, greatly reducing the time for Anglo-Indian communications.⁸⁵ It was also planned to link up this road, by means

⁸⁰ William P. Andrew, *London to Lahore, or the Euphrates, Scinde and Punjaub Railway* (London, 1857).

⁸¹ W. P. Andrew, *The Scinde Railway in its Relations to the Euphrates Valley and Other Routes to India* (London, 1856), p. 200.

⁸² *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 386, p. 57; *ibid.*, 1872, No. 322, p. 84; Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India* (London, 1857), p. 175.

⁸³ Andrew, *The Scinde Railway in its Relations to the Euphrates Valley and Other Routes to India*, pp. 200-201.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 202; *London Times*, 6 June, 1856. The term "short cut" as applied to this route appears to have been used first by the *Times*.

⁸⁵ Two Travellers, *The Euphrates Valley Routes to India: An Examination of the Memoir Published by Mr. W. P. Andrew* (2d ed., London, 1857), p. 19. It is here shown that the distance saved by this route would not amount to 1000 miles, while the time gained would be but 3 or 4 days instead of 10. This pamphlet was

of a supplementary railway, with a European trunk line, once such an artery had been completed to Constantinople.³⁶ The Company proposed, moreover, to develop the internal resources of Mesopotamia by reclaiming lands and by furnishing marketing facilities for such surplus products as might be raised by the Arabs. The strategic value of such a road was not overlooked. It was particularly recommended as a logical line for the sending of troops to India, the time of passage from England to Kurrachee being estimated at only 14 days when the road was complete. Since the Euphrates Valley was very level, the cost of building a railroad was estimated at the relatively low sum of £5000 to £6000 per mile.³⁷ The total cost was placed at £16,000,000.

The principal concern of the promoters was to enlist the confidence and support of the British Government, and nothing was left undone to show what definite political advantages would be derived from the construction of such a line. Russia was still looked upon by many as a dangerous rival in the East as well after the Peace of Paris as before. Her defeat had scarcely been decisive, and the change in Anglo-French relations at the close of the war further counteracted the moral effects of the Crimean campaign. It was in this connection that the Euphrates Valley Association scored most heavily. It was shown that Russia, in extending her conquests southward to the point of endangering British interests, must follow one of four fairly well defined routes: (1) the line from Kars to the Euphrates Valley and Mesopotamia; (2) that from Erivan by way of Lake Van to Mosul and thence to Bagdad; (3) that from Tabriz to Shuster; or (4) the road leading from Teheran by Ispahan to Shuster and thence to the Persian Gulf.³⁸ All of these lines were intersected by the line of the Euphrates, "which, running in an oblique direction from the head of the Gulf north of Antioch to the Persian Gulf, passes along the diagonal of a great quadrilateral, which has its two western corners on the Mediterranean, its two eastern on the Caspian and Persian Seas, and so takes all Russian lines of advance in the flank."³⁹

These arguments, coupled with the advocacy of the line by

published, apparently, in the interests of the Suez Canal, and was a bitter arraignment of the Euphrates Valley project from beginning to end. See Andrew, *The Scinde Railway*, p. 36.

³⁶ Andrew, *The Scinde Railway* . . . pp. 203, 204; Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, p. 12 n.; *London Times*, 20 May, 1856. A Channel tunnel between Dover and Calais was suggested for further reduction of time, as it already had been on other occasions.

³⁷ Lane-Poole, *Life of Chesney*, pp. 428-429; *London Times*, 11 July, 1857.

³⁸ Andrew, *Our Scientific Frontier* (London, 1880), pp. 98-99.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Indian authorities, carried great weight with the Government, chiefly because of the possibility of scotching the territorial aggrandizement of Russia and of providing a worthy diversion to the Suez Canal project. Lord Clarendon expressed himself as entirely in favor of the proposition and pledged the support of the Government. Queen Victoria also expressed approval of the plan. Lord Palmerston carefully refrained from committing himself on the matter, although he allowed it to be understood that he greatly favored the idea of developing the direct route in preference to that through Egypt.⁴⁰ Palmerston's real attitude at this time is indicated by the fact that the Foreign Office undertook to give diplomatic support at Constantinople for the securing of a concession from the Turkish Government. To this end, Sir Henry Bulwer was sent out to Constantinople on special mission, when all plans were ready, to assist Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in guiding the project through the devious channels of Turkish politics, made more than usually devious at this time by the attractions being offered by rival French projects. The proposition was taken up with Musurus Pasha, the Turkish minister in England, in March.⁴¹ After some consideration, Musurus strongly approved the railway idea, and undertook to exert his influence on his Government. His recommendation carried considerable weight with the Grand Vizier, Aali Pasha, who expressed himself as favorably disposed toward the project before a formal request had been made for a concession from the Porte.⁴²

At this point the railway project became associated with a plan for the construction of a line of electric telegraph through European Turkey to the confines of India along the line of the railway. Such a plan was presented to the Foreign Office for approval in June, 1856, and within a few weeks was given hearty approval for much the same reasons as applied to the railway plan.⁴³ The European and Indian Junction Telegraph Company, which numbered among its projectors several who were also connected with the railway, found its interests largely bound up with that enterprise.⁴⁴ Although the telegraph did not have the same

⁴⁰ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 425-427; Two Travellers, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁴¹ Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, pp. 192, 193.

⁴² *London Times*, 4 Sept., 20 Nov., 1856.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16 June, 1856; Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, pp. 176, 229-249.

⁴⁴ Andrew, *A Letter to Viscount Palmerston on the Political Advantages of the Euphrates Valley Railway, and the Necessity of the Financial Support of Her Majesty's Government* (London, 1857), pp. 56-58, "Report of the Evidence in the Committee of the House of Commons on the European and Indian Junction Telegraph Co."; *Telegraphic Communication with India, Reprinted from "The Times" and "Morning Chronicle"* (London, 1858), p. 9. Kurrachee about this time ex-

political value as the proposed railway, its fate hinged on the outcome of the negotiations of the Euphrates Valley Railway Company in London and at the Porte.

In August, 1856, the promoters of the railway received a hint from the Foreign Office that the necessary political support for the line might be expedited by some evidence of a scientific nature showing that the section proposed to be built first would be entirely feasible. In consequence of this suggestion, the Chairman of the Company, W. P. Andrew, immediately despatched two of his associates, Maj.-Gen. F. R. Chesney and John McNeill, to the Levant with the double purpose of carrying out some preliminary surveys and of assisting with the diplomatic negotiations at Constantinople.⁴⁵ Chesney, who had been made Consulting Engineer of the new Company because of his prominent connection with the Euphrates route, was supplied with instructions from Andrew and papers from the Foreign Office giving him full powers in aiding Lord Stratford and Sir Henry Bulwer in securing a concession for the road.⁴⁶ While Chesney stopped at Constantinople, McNeill, accompanied by a corps of surveyors, proceeded to the coast of Syria and occupied himself in inspecting the harbor of Seleucia (Suedia) and the adjacent coast, which had tentatively been selected as the western terminus of the line. Chesney joined him here later, and surveys were made of the Beilan Pass through the Amanus Mountains and of the proposed line as far as Aleppo. Although some formidable grades were found in the mountains, both engineers concluded that they offered no insuperable obstacle to a steam line. The harbor of Seleucia was found to be easily capable of improvement as a commercial or military port, and although not so commodious as that of Alexandretta, it was adjudged more desirable from the point of view of railway engineering.⁴⁷

The railway and telegraph lines had meanwhile been debated at length in the Turkish Council. The early willingness of the Sultan's advisers to grant concessions for these enterprises was gravely modified by the arguments brought forward by a power-

perienced a real "boom," because of its relation to the projected lines of communication and the northwest frontier, and aspired to replace Bombay as the principal port of western India. Although this ambition was not realized, much of the development was of permanent character.—See W. P. Andrew, *The Port of Kurrachee* . . . (London, 1857); A. F. Baillie, *Kurrachee (Karachi): Past, Present, and Future* (London, 1890).

⁴⁵ London *Times*, 4 Sept., 1856.

⁴⁶ Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, pp. 200-228.

⁴⁷ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 429-453; London *Times*, 9 Sept., 1856.

ful French group for a rival railway project. The English concern demanded as the basis of their concession, first, a guarantee on the part of the Turkish Government of a minimum dividend of 6% per annum for 99 years on the first section of the road from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, with power to raise capital for steamers, etc., at a rate to be determined later; second, a lease for 99 years, free of charge, of all necessary land for the railway and works; and third, a guarantee against all competition from works of a similar nature, and the grant of lands, woods, and forests, the property of the Turkish State, at a certain distance on either side of the line.⁴⁸ The French syndicate, on the other hand, required no such guarantees; and since they were strongly supported by influential persons in Paris, understood to be the Emperor and members of his family, the Turkish Ministers hesitated to accept the more formidable English project, in spite of the pressure exerted by Redcliffe backed by the Foreign Office.⁴⁹ Moreover, the agent of the French project was the accomplished English traveller and diplomat, A. H. Layard, who from long and intimate acquaintance was *persona grata* to some of the Turkish Ministers. Layard had long taken an interest in the Euphrates route, having taken an active part in the completion of the surveys of the rivers of Mesopotamia and Persia in 1840 and 1841.⁵⁰ His activities on behalf of the French at a time when Anglo-French relations were rather strained are at least partly to be explained by his personal hostility to Lord Palmerston, and his strong disapproval of Palmerston's entire foreign policy.

During the progress of negotiations at the Porte, when it began to appear that British influence would win the duel, the French agents proposed an amalgamation of British and French enterprises, thus making the road essentially an international undertaking and maintaining a united Anglo-French front against Russia.⁵¹ This interesting proposal savored strongly of the arguments which had been used to enlist British support in behalf of the Suez Canal, and it was not long considered by the English interests. The feeling was strong since the close of the Crimean War that the French might prove to be as great a menace in the East as the Russians lately had been. Such complications greatly protracted

⁴⁸ Two Travellers, *op. cit.*, p. 17; *London Times*, 2 Dec., 1856, 10 Jan., 11 Feb., 1857.

⁴⁹ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 440; *Morning Herald*, 30 March, 4, 11, 18 April, 1857.

⁵⁰ A. H. Layard, *Autobiography and Letters* (2 vols., London, 1903), I, 328-331.

⁵¹ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 440-441.

negotiations, however, and it was only on January 5, 1857, after the Turks had been reminded that they had most to expect in the way of future support from Great Britain, that a successful outcome was assured.⁵²

The *firman* granted to the Euphrates Valley projectors was based on that prepared for Chesney's Euphrates Expedition in 1834. It conceded all of the points asked for by the Company, and once the matter was definitely settled, the Turkish Government displayed considerable enthusiasm for the new road. A concession for the proposed telegraph line was authorized about the same time. The *Calcutta Review* was jubilant over the prospects for a new "overland route."⁵³

Verily, we live in stirring and marvellous times [it said]. When, ere many years are over, we are borne along the Euphrates Valley Railway to England in 20 days, or along the "World's highway" in 10, while our thoughts are flashed along the telegraph wires in so many minutes, we shall begin to feel ourselves so close at home that we shall cease to consider our separation from our mother country as "an honourable exile."⁵⁴

The final report of the surveying commission in charge of Sir John McNeill indicated more favorable conditions for the construction of the first section of 150 miles of railway than had been anticipated at first. Few deep cuts or embankments appeared to be necessary, and the steepest mountain grade in prospect was much less formidable than many found in European lines. The principal difficulty lay in the frequency with which the River Orontes would have to be crossed and the number of bridges thus made necessary. On the whole, however, construction prospects were surprisingly good. Native labor appeared to be available in abundance. Most of the seven divisions of this first section of the line presented so few engineering problems that the average cost per mile came to be estimated at £8,858, a figure well below the original allowance of £10,000.⁵⁵

The Euphrates Valley Railway Company had meanwhile completed its organization. Although the whole scheme rested on the assumption of the correctness of Chesney's reports in 1837

⁵² Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 441, 442. London Times, 10 Jan., 22 Jan., 11 July, 1857.

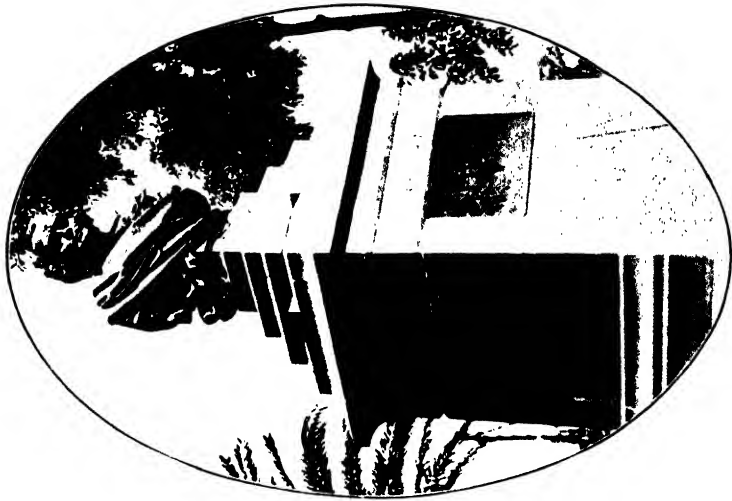
⁵³ Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ *Calcutta Review*, LV, 46. See, "A Traveller," *The Euphrates Valley Route to India*, quoted in Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Andrew, *Letter to Viscount Palmerston* . . . pp. 35-45.



General Francis R. Chesney



Bust of Thomas Waghorn at Suez

as to the navigability of the lower Euphrates, which reports had been shown incorrect by later surveys,⁵⁶ there was little hesitation on the part of the public to support the venture. The Company's shares were considerably oversubscribed within a few days after the books were opened, and enough capital was then in sight to carry on the work at once.⁵⁷

After the close of the Crimean War, however, the state of Turkish finances was so low, that notwithstanding the favorable terms of the Turkish *firman*, the Company considered it wise, as a practical business precaution, to secure the definite support of the British Government in the form of a guarantee of a minimum rate of interest on the capital to be invested. Already some question had been raised by the critics of the enterprise as to the stability of any project sponsored by the Turkish Government not backed by tangible assets of some nature.

But who guarantees the guarantee? [asked some of the doubters] . . . The financial difficulties of the Turkish Government are notorious. . . The schemes which are really beneficial to Turkey are projects commercially sound; projects whose advantages are so apparent to capitalists that the money required is forthcoming without a guarantee.⁵⁸

When we have thrown away £10,000,000 or £20,000,000 on wild goose adventures [said the *Times*], people may benefit by the experience purchased on terms so extravagant. To catch the public ear something vague and vast must be poured into it — something promising all, most probably ending in nothing.⁵⁹

The logic of these objections led the Company to stipulate informally that, in case the Turkish Government granted the concession demanded, guaranteeing a 6% return on the first branch of the line, the British Government would underwrite the agreement to the extent of guaranteeing a minimum rate of interest (4%) on the capital invested in the first section of the line. Foreign Office permitted it to be understood that this ment would undoubtedly be approved by Parliament

⁵⁶ Sir James Outram, for example, ascended the Euphrates in a little steamer, the *Planet*, drawing only 3 feet 8 inches that he found Chesney's charts correct for some distance. "sadly wrong." — *London Times*, 6 June, 1857.

⁵⁷ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CX 17 Feb., 1857.

⁵⁸ Two Travellers, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁵⁹ J

So sanguine were the expectations of the Company's directors of receiving Parliamentary support, that with the securing of the Turkish concession they believed all doubt concerning the construction of the road to be at an end. Soon after the arrival in London of reports of the favorable action of the Porte on the railway project, plans were put into execution for the road. Preparations were made looking toward the construction of harbor works at Seleucia by the Turkish Government, stores and supplies were sent out for the commencement of the railway itself, and contracts were let for the building of special shallow-draft, flat-bottomed boats to be used on the Euphrates.

Lord Palmerston was very deliberate with regard to Government action toward guaranteeing a minimum rate of interest on the capital to be invested in the railway enterprise. As the weeks slipped by and no move was made toward carrying out that feature of the original plan, fear began to arise that he was purposely temporizing and that his enthusiasm for the work had to some degree cooled.⁶⁰

In order to effect decisive action as soon as possible, an imposing delegation of friends of the Euphrates Valley project, consisting of 96 notables, mainly members of Parliament and conspicuous diplomatic and military men, waited on the Prime Minister on June 22. The deputation was headed by Lord Shaftesbury, who introduced the subject by calling attention to some of the obvious advantages of the alternative route and of the railway in particular. William Andrew followed with a rather extended review of both the political and commercial aspects of the project, and summed up the findings of the engineering staff during the recent surveys. Other members of the group dwelt on various important features of the line, showing particularly how communication would be facilitated thereby.

In reply, Lord Palmerston assured the deputation that the Government were fully alive to the importance of the Euphrates route; that they had supported and would continue to support it.

He added that he could not at the moment give an opinion on the guarantee on the capital invested. He would have to consult his colleagues on this matter. So he requested Mr. Andrew to put the proposition in writing, that it might receive a

⁶⁰ With which the British Government took active measures for the route to India caused a good deal of exasperation. The *Times*, August 1857, said, "Many people are wondering whether some work is being done in India. A more practical question would be whether there is hardly a subject on which the people are more alive than that of the Euphrates route to the East." 3 Oct., 1857.

proper amount of consideration, and he concluded by saying that the Government would be happy to aid the railway if it was in their power.⁶¹

The brief war with Persia early in 1857, and the announcement of the outbreak of the great Indian Mutiny in May, gave point to the whole matter and aroused a great deal of public interest. The Persian campaign, which was as successful as it was brief,⁶² fortunately ended in time for the transfer of British troops to the scenes of hostilities in India. Even before the news of the Indian Revolt had reached England, the unrest in India and difficulties in China had led to the sending out, in March, of four regiments destined for Hong Kong, and the next month four more regiments were despatched to India, all going by way of the Cape of Good Hope.⁶³ Meanwhile, more alarming reports pouring in from the Indian Presidencies focused attention on the need both for a quicker means of communication and for a more direct route by which troops and supplies could be sent out.

It was while the oriental situation was at its worst that the matter of guaranteeing a small rate of interest to the stockholders of the Euphrates Valley Railway Company finally came up in Parliament. The proposed measure appeared to have every chance of success. The public had undoubtedly been enlisted in favor of the railway scheme. Those of the Government who feared that the Turkish Government would fail to make good its guarantee of a 6% return on the capital invested, leaving the financial burden on the British Government, were shown that it was altogether probable that, in case the revenues of the railway did not bring in a sufficient return, the Turkish Government would undoubtedly furnish a part of the guaranteed 6% interest, and the British Government would be required to pay only that portion of a minimum rate of 4% which might be wanting above the profits of the railway and the funds supplied by the Turks. This made the necessity of the expenditure of any money in support of the venture by the British Government appear to be a very remote possibility, indeed.⁶⁴

On the night of August 14, 1857, Mr. Sothern Estcourt, a member of the House who had been interested in the original Euphrates Expedition, introduced the question of a guarantee of

⁶¹ *The Times and Morning Herald*, 23 June, 1857; Andrew, *Letter to Viscount Palmerston* . . . pp. 1-5.

⁶² See the Treaty of 4 March, 1857, in *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, XLVII, 42-43. See also *The History of the Indian Mutiny*, p. 224.

⁶³ *The Pamure Papers*, II, 361-379.

⁶⁴ Andrew, *Letter to Viscount Palmerston*, pp. 20-21, 23-24, *passim*.

a minimum rate of interest in the House of Commons.⁶⁶ In speaking on the subject, Estcourt pointed out that the Euphrates route was essential, not as a rival route to that through Egypt, but as a supplementary or alternative route. Many of the advantages which had been urged in favor of the Euphrates line on other occasions were reviewed. He told the House he believed that "on the whole surface of the globe they would not find so many miles as favorable for engineering purposes" as along the Euphrates route.⁶⁶ The line, it was shown, would correlate well with existing railways in India, although, for the present, the Euphrates railway would extend only to the Euphrates, and from thence the communication would be carried on in iron river steamers and in ocean packets, thus completing the connection between the Mediterranean and the ports of Kurrachee and Bombay. The whole project having been presented at considerable length, Estcourt asked for a guarantee for the road covering a little more than the period of construction.⁶⁷

Objections to the proposition were voiced by Mr. Crawford and Mr. Gladstone. Crawford considered the railway a "very chimerical scheme" on a number of grounds, and proposed a telegraph line instead, which, he thought, would have most of the political advantages of the railway and would avoid the objections inherent in the railway plan.⁶⁸ Gladstone strongly objected to the idea of giving a guarantee; he "viewed a guarantee almost with horror." He thought an outright cash subsidy much preferable. He supposed the Government would lose popularity by rejecting such a "philanthropic proposal," but he thought it best not to give other countries a basis "for alleging that we are setting an example of interference with their government and domestic affairs." He was inclined to see in such a proposition a means of breaking up the European concert, and he thought the Suez Canal a much better proposition because of its international character. The Euphrates Valley Railway as a private commercial venture he was prepared to support; but it had been advocated primarily as a political project, and was objectionable for that reason.⁶⁹

Others debated the qualities of the Euphrates scheme *pro* and *con*, agreeing in general that the railway should not be made a

⁶⁶ Estcourt had previously made several attempts to bring up the subject, but had apparently received intimations that the time was not ripe. See *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVII, 1226, 1652.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1652.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1652-1662; *The Times*, 15 Aug., 1857.

⁶⁸ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVII, 1662-1664.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1664-1672.

"stalking horse to cover up national animosities."⁷⁰ The general tenor of the debate did not appear to favor the railway scheme. Still, the friends of the line did not despair, for Lord Palmerston had but a few days before indicated his entire approval of the plan.⁷¹ When Palmerston rose to speak, however, he immediately crushed the whole project by indicating that Government support would not be given. "However glad we should be to see that project completed," he said, "we cannot hold out the slightest encouragement that we are disposed, either directly or indirectly, to advance any money for the attainment of that end."⁷² He was prepared to promise Government support for a telegraph line to be carried down the Red Sea or through the Euphrates Valley to India, but he was convinced of the "inexpediency of Government's meddling with such enterprises . . . to be carried out in a foreign state and the political messes which would result from such a connection."⁷³ He maintained that the railway was unnecessary in any case, since the Suez route and telegraphic lines would provide for sufficient communication facilities, while there was a more direct railway route still, through European Turkey, Asia Minor, and Baluchistan.⁷⁴

This crushing defeat gave the death blow to the Euphrates Valley Railway scheme for the time being, though it did not put an end to public, and even to Government, consideration of the use which might be made of the Euphrates route in times of emergency for the transport of troops. The sudden reversal of attitude on the part of Lord Palmerston toward a scheme of transportation he was known lately to favor produced no little perplexity and bitterness among those who had relied completely on his support, and even the general public were at a loss to account for the turning down of the project at such a critical time.

It subsequently developed that Palmerston's sudden change of mind had been at least partly due to a conference with the Emperor Napoleon III, who was then in England ostensibly to pay a visit to the King and Queen, on the very morning of August 14.⁷⁵ Being summoned by telegraph to Osborne, where the Emperor was visiting, Palmerston had a long and secret interview after which he returned to London "a changed if not a wiser man."⁷⁶ In consequence of this interview, Palmerston felt compelled to

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1675.

⁷¹ *Quarterly Review*, CII, 392 f.; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

⁷² *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVII, 1677.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1676, 1677.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1677-1683.

⁷⁵ *London Times*, 8, 10, 11 Aug., 1857.

⁷⁶ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 446; *The Times* (City Article), 4 May, 1858.

give up the railway project, because of the attitude he had taken toward the Suez Canal enterprise.⁷⁷ As a means of preserving the nominal alliance between the two countries, Palmerston undoubtedly considered it wiser to abandon the railway than to accept the canal, for the alliance obviously would not weather a policy of British aggression on both points. Moreover, it is altogether likely that the need of securing French consent for the use of the overland route for the despatch of troops to India at this critical stage of the Indian Mutiny was a prominent factor in the abandonment of the rail plan.⁷⁸ In this manner the Emperor obtained a measure of satisfaction for the diplomatic defeat suffered by his agents at Constantinople early in the year when the French railway scheme had been turned down,⁷⁹ and De Lesseps was to this extent avenged.

Here the Euphrates Valley project rested for the time being. In view of the many political obstacles to be encountered, the road could not safely be constructed through Turkish territory without the active support of the British Government, even had plenty of capital been available. Without some guarantee on the part of the British, the Turkish concession and the guarantee of 6% return on the investment would have lasted only so long as British diplomacy maintained an unquestioned supremacy at the Porte. Not even the armed intervention of France in Syria in 1860 revived the project. The Euphrates Valley Railway therefore passed into the limbo of abandoned hopes until new issues brought about its revival under a different ministry nearly fifteen years later. It is worthy of note, however, that with the passing of the English project nothing further was heard of the French scheme which was to have demanded no guarantees of any kind.

⁷⁷ Percy Fitzgerald, *The Great Canal at Suez*, I, 97-98.

⁷⁸ Palmerston seems to have been more than a little anxious lest "France and Russia unite to carry into effect some great scheme of mutual ambition." This gave point to his care not to cause particular offense to the Emperor Napoleon. — Ashley, *Life of Palmerston*, II, 127-128.

⁷⁹ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 446; *Quarterly Review*, CXX, 354-397.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BUILDING OF THE SUEZ CANAL

DE LESSEPS' return to Egypt in November, 1856, was only just in time to prevent the despairing abandonment of the whole canal project by the Viceroy, who was met at every turn by intrigues, fostered if not designed by English and Turkish agencies, and intended to render his policy intolerable.¹ In order to clear the atmosphere, De Lesseps encouraged a military expedition into the desert. During the three months occupied by this manœuvre, two noteworthy steps were taken. In order that the Viceroy might have the encouragement derived from tangible accomplishment, De Lesseps directed the surveying of the Fresh Water Canal, which was to supply the forces of construction on the ship canal and at the same time serve as a source of irrigation for the reclamation of the arid but fertile lands along the course of the proposed waterway.² The second step was of a very different nature. De Lesseps determined on the bold course of appealing directly from the English Government to the English people for approval and support. He utilized such leisure as his desert trip afforded, therefore, for outlining a lecture tour in England which would enable him to present his case in person and carry out an advertising campaign of a rather novel sort.³

In April, 1857, he set out for England, armed with maps and plans, descriptive literature, and a number of letters of introduction to persons of importance in the mercantile as well as in the political world. The itinerary and details of the series of English meetings were arranged largely by Mr. (later Sir) Daniel A. Lange, an old acquaintance of De Lesseps, and the head of a large mercantile house having extensive interests in India and the Far East.⁴ The route determined upon included most of the

¹ Percy Fitzgerald, *The Great Canal at Suez*, I, 78-79.

² F. de Lesseps, *The Suez Canal*, p. 306.

³ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 80-82.

⁴ John Spencer Price, *The Early History of the Suez Canal* (Rev. ed., London,

larger commercial centres in the kingdom. The municipal authorities were enlisted whenever possible and mass meetings were held in public buildings at which De Lesseps spoke, although he was limited almost entirely to the use of French. Lange in each instance gave the substance of the talk in English, questions were entertained, and usually resolutions were drawn up approving the canal plan. No financial support was asked. For the most part, the plan of the meetings met with success.⁵ De Lesseps learned much about the interests and temper of the English people, whom he was compelled from any point of view to take into extensive consideration, and he undermined to some degree the offensive policy of the Government by his direct appeal to the country.⁶

The resolution voted by the meeting held at Liverpool on April 30 was characteristic of those prepared by other public meetings of the same kind and by various commercial organizations:

We, the bankers, merchants, and manufacturers of Liverpool, consider that the execution of this great enterprise would be productive of the greatest advantages to the commercial and shipping interests of England, as of all other nations, and earnestly desire that the enterprise may attain, without any impediment, a speedy and successful realization.⁷

Such complimentary statements, judiciously used in advertising, were later employed with telling effect in the financial campaign.

The resolutions recorded by commercial groups in favor of the canal only served to strengthen the hostility to it in official quarters. Since the close of the Crimean War, this opposition had been growing steadily bolder in tone, both at home and abroad.⁸ In

etc., pr. print., n.d.), pp. 5, 6. This little volume is based on Lange's own account of these proceedings, and was written primarily to "vindicate" Lange from the many criticisms which arose from his connection with the Frenchman.

⁵ *Diplomatic Review*, IV, 352; "Memorial from the Public Meeting of Merchants, etc., of Newcastle-on-Tyne to the Board of Trade in favor of the Lesseps Canal Scheme," 30 May, 1857, in F. O., Suez Canal Papers, 78/1340.

⁶ Lange, however, whose unselfish devotion was largely responsible for the carrying out of this program, was never given the least credit or honor by De Lesseps, who appears to have regarded him with a high degree of jealousy which was "one of the greatest blots on De Lesseps' record." — Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15.

⁷ F. de Lesseps, *Inquiry into the Opinions of the Commercial Classes of Great Britain on the Suez Ship Canal*, pp. 6-13.

⁸ This is easily discovered in the correspondence of the Foreign Office, which by September, 1856, had apparently convinced itself that all that was desired by the Viceroy and his French adviser was a deep and defensible trench across the Isthmus, after which they would declare the canal impossible of completion, leaving the investors ("speculators") to pay the bill. — F. O., 78/1340, Clarendon to Redcliffe, 9 Sept., 1856 (Confidential).

June, upon his return to London from the provinces, De Lesseps was again assured by Lord Palmerston that "You know that I have made no secret of the fact that I am utterly opposed to your scheme." De Lesseps is said to have replied that, far from feeling discouraged by this opposition, he actually welcomed it "as an engine for raising the capital."⁹ But Palmerston soon had opportunity to deliver a strong blow at the "bubble scheme" in the House of Commons. In reply to a query put by Mr. Berkeley on July 7 as to whether "any objection be entertained by Her Majesty's Government to the undertaking," Lord Palmerston replied:

Her Majesty's Government certainly can not undertake to use their influence with the Sultan to induce him to give permission for the construction of this canal, because for the last fifteen years Her Majesty's Government have used all the influence they possess at Constantinople and in Egypt to prevent that scheme from being carried into execution. I believe it is physically impracticable, except at an expense which would be too great to warrant the expectation of any returns. However, that is not the grounds on which the Government have opposed the scheme. But the scheme is one hostile to the interests of this country, opposed to the standing policy of England in regard to the connection of Egypt with Turkey, a policy which has been supported by the war and the treaty of Paris. The obvious political tendency . . . is to render more easy the separation of Egypt from Turkey. . . .

It is one of those plans so often brought out to make dupes of English capitalists and leave them poor. The scheme was launched, I believe, about fifteen years ago as a rival to the railway from Alexandria by Cairo to Suez, which, being infinitely more practicable and likely to be more useful, obtained the preëminence.¹⁰

On subsequent occasions Lord Palmerston held forth on the floor of the House in similar fashion, denouncing the canal in scathing fashion, calling it "physically impossible" in one breath and speaking of the political problems it would create if carried through in another. He thought it would quickly silt up and he

⁹ Quoted in Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 85-86.

¹⁰ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CXLVI, 1043-1044; F. O., 78/1340, Supplement to the *Free Press*, Oct., 1857. Ascribing the inception of the canal idea to a desire to compete with the Egyptian Railway was, of course, putting the cart before the horse.

was certain that sailing vessels could never use it, while he maintained that in any event the railway was quicker and more useful.¹¹ All of these statements proved to be boomerangs. Being illogical, they failed to convince men who had studied the *Report* of the International Scientific Commission, and being only diatribes, they alienated from the opposition many who otherwise found scant sympathy with a project which undoubtedly held many political possibilities.¹² Gladstone, for example, warned him that "You have engaged in a contest in which you will in the end certainly give way"; and again, "There is not a statesman in Europe who does not denounce the policy of this opposition as unwarrantable and selfish."¹³ Only those like Stephenson, who had long since definitely committed themselves and feared to lose prestige by surrender, or to whom political connections were mandatory, continued to support Palmerston in the House. Going further than many commercial organizations, which in passing resolutions on the subject gave real or implied censure to Palmerston's attitude, a Foreign Affairs Committee of Sheffield went so far as to denounce the Prime Minister as a "criminal."¹⁴ Nevertheless the Government stubbornly maintained its position, even though this position tended to become constantly more vulnerable.

While De Lesseps was apparently making little headway toward having the canal concession approved at Constantinople, which had at the outset been assumed on all hands to be requisite before actual construction work could be undertaken, events were moving toward a breaking of the *impasse*. The British Government had thought in 1856 to substantiate their claim that the canal was impracticable from the engineering point of view by quietly despatching the corvette *Tartarus*, under the command of Capt. Mansell, to make thorough soundings in the Bay of Pelusium, where it was proposed to place the Mediterranean entrance to the canal. The survey was well carried out, but the chart made by Capt. Mansell failed to disclose the unfavorable situation anticipated. On the contrary, nothing was found which did not largely agree with the *Report* of the International Scientific Commission. Capt. Mansell, who may not have wholly ap-

¹¹ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVI, 1703, 1705.

¹² See, for instance, the criticisms of Palmerston's remarks in the House of Commons regarding the canal as interference in the internal affairs of the Turkish Empire and contradicting the principle of non-interference adopted with regard to the Euphrates Valley Railway scheme, in the *Ost-Deutsche Post*, 19 Aug., 1857 (No. 188).

¹³ Quoted in Joseph E. Nourse, *The Maritime Canal of Suez . . .* (Washington, 1884), p. 23.

¹⁴ *Report of the Sheffield Foreign Affairs Committee*, Oct., 1857, p. 3.

preciated the motives which prompted his survey, failed at first to maintain a very discreet silence upon his findings, and in consequence his chart only added weight to the growing quantity of evidence that the canal was feasible.¹⁵

It was becoming evident toward the beginning of 1857 that the canal could make no headway as long as the French Government kept up active diplomatic pressure in Egypt and the British held sway at Constantinople. The French Government, therefore, made pretense of dropping the matter entirely and instructed Consul Sabatier to cease all official efforts in Egypt, in behalf of the canal, though as it had no connection with De Lesseps, the French Foreign Office refused to bring any pressure to bear on him.¹⁶ Actually, however, the theatre of French diplomatic action was only transferred from Egypt to Constantinople, where railway projects were beginning to enter into a subject already badly complicated. Here as at Paris the stormy words of Palmerston on the floor of the House of Commons began to retard the current of British diplomacy.¹⁷ The representatives of other European nations were also beginning to announce the receipt of official instructions to promote the interests of the Canal Company.¹⁸ M. Thouvenel, French Ambassador at Constantinople, was therefore instructed to render such secret assistance to the canal as he could without actually committing the French Government.

This concentration of influence quickly made itself apparent in the vacillating tactics of the Turkish Ministers, and gave Lord Stratford new doubts of his ability long to keep the Porte in tow. "With Reschid Pasha at the head of the Administration," he wrote to Lord Clarendon in April, "I cannot entertain any serious apprehension of his (Lesseps') succeeding so far as to obtain the Sultan's consent, but I doubt on the other hand whether a decided refusal will be given. It is more probable that the Porte's inclination to side with Her Majesty's Government will be expressed by some new pretext for delay."¹⁹ Lord Stratford's opinion

¹⁵ F. O. Suez Canal Papers, 78/1340, Bruce to Clarendon, 21 July, 1856; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 69.

¹⁶ F. O. 78/1340, Cowley to Clarendon, No. 29, 4 Jan., 1837; *ibid.*, Bruce to Clarendon, No. 12, 6 March, 1857 (Confidential); *ibid.*, Cowley to Clarendon, No. 728, 7 May, 1857.

¹⁷ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 91. See the *Quarterly Review*, CII, 357-361.

¹⁸ "The Austrian Government believes strongly in the Canal—a highway which will restore to the commerce of Europe its former rectilinear direction instead of its present immense angle of deviation."—Trans. from the *Ost-Deutsche Post*, 25 Dec., 1857 (No. 296).

¹⁹ F. O. 78/1340, Redcliffe to Clarendon, No. 313, 6 April, 1857 (Confidential).

proved to be well founded. The Egyptian Government continued to promote the completion of the railway line from Cairo to Suez, the Viceroy's ardor for the canal appeared to have cooled,²⁰ and Redcliffe retained enough of his dominance at Stamboul to contest successfully with the growing pressure brought to bear on the Turkish Ministers from all sides to sanction the canal scheme.

By the close of the year 1857, this persistent and determined obstruction of the canal by the British Government had produced a much clearer definition of that work as a political issue than Palmerston with all of his bitter invectives had ever approached. It had become sufficiently evident to everyone that the real objection to the canal was that it would open up a new strait — *un Bosphore* — and hence for the safety of Turkish and British interests, as well as for the sake of the peace of Europe, the canal should be made as much the subject of international engagements as the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and for the same general reason.²¹ The Austrian Government was said to be anxious for a common agreement on this matter before the canal was constructed so that it might not become the sole property "of a great naval power."²² There is nothing to indicate that this point of view *per se* was particularly acceptable to the British Government, but since it offered another means of postponing definite action by the Porte on the canal concession, the Turkish Ministers were encouraged to insist that their ratification of the Viceroy's concession would be impossible until all of the European powers interested had come to an agreement on the subject.²³

The course of diplomacy at Constantinople caused De Lesseps again to employ his personal influence at that strategic centre. Arriving early in December, 1857, he soon resumed the efforts which he had previously given up in February, 1855. He found the situation much as he had left it, with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe still determining the foreign policies of the Turkish Ministers, whose personal sympathies lay, they privately averred, with De Lesseps. Lord Stratford, however, was on the point of severing his long connection with the Porte as the Great Eltchi, partly as a result of the agreement reached by Palmerston and the Emperor

²⁰ F. O. 78/1340, Bruce to Clarendon, No. 3, 5 Jan., 1857; *ibid.*, Clarendon to Bruce, No. 7, 19 Jan., 1857; *ibid.*, Bruce to Clarendon, No. 12, 6 March, 1857 (Confidential); *ibid.*, No. 15, 23 March, 1857 (Confidential); *ibid.*, No. 17, 28 March, 1857.

²¹ See De Lesseps, *Inquiry into the Opinions of the Commercial Classes of Great Britain* . . . p. 128; *Quarterly Review*, CII, 354-362.

²² *Ost-Deutsche Post*, 25 Dec., 1857 (No. 296).

²³ F. O. 78/1340, Redcliffe to Clarendon, No. 1067, 9 Dec., 1857 (Confidential).

Napoleon III at Osborne,²⁴ and De Lesseps had high hopes of being able to surmount all other obstacles at the Porte.

Such hopes were premature. Before his departure, Lord Stratford had impressed upon the Turkish Ministers the necessity of guarding against two great dangers which would undoubtedly arise in connection with the canal, namely, that the Great Powers might go to war to determine its control, and that it might result in the separation of Egypt from Turkey. The absence of the magnetic personality of the Great Ambassador could not fail to dissipate some of the influence of his arguments, but to guard against a diplomatic revolution at such a critical time, the British Foreign Office let it be understood that a change in representatives at Constantinople did not indicate any change in policy. About the same time the sudden death of Reschid Pasha, who had been steeped in English prejudices, made the British Foreign Office very apprehensive with regard to maintaining its prestige. On January 1, 1858, a telegram in cypher was sent to Mr. Charles Alison, *chargé d'affaires* at the Porte pending the arrival of Sir Henry Bulwer as Ambassador, containing the following significant instructions:

Inform Grand Vizier that we have no reason to believe that any change has taken place in the policy of the Porte respecting the Suez Canal, but if the Sultan were to give his consent to a scheme the direct and obvious object of which is to separate Egypt from Turkey, the Sultan must not expect that the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire could hereafter be a principle to guide the policy of the Great Powers of Europe because the Sultan would himself have been a party to the setting aside of that principle.²⁵

Three days later, Mr. Alison had the satisfaction of returning to the Foreign Office the reply of Aali Pasha, the new Grand Vizier, which was a monument to the effectiveness of the diplomacy of Lord Stratford.

. . . Aali Pasha desired me to inform you [wrote the first interpreter of the Embassy], that the Porte still withholds its consent to the construction of that canal, that in consequence of their determination he had been requested by the Council to draw up a statement setting forth the Porte's

²⁴ De Lesseps, *Lettres, Journal et Documents pour servir à l'histoire du Canal de Suez*, 1854, 1855, 1856 (Paris, 1875), 2d Ser., p. 148.

²⁵ F. O., Suez Canal Papers, 78/1421, No. 1, 1 Jan., 1858.

readiness to view M. de Lesseps' proposals in a favorable light on certain conditions, to which, he felt satisfied, it would be out of the power of the projectors to accede. . .

The intention of the Porte in adopting this mode of proceeding is to declare itself opposed to M. de Lesseps' undertaking and to guard its own interests for the future in the event of public opinion in England ultimately counteracting the intentions or modifying the views of Her Majesty's Government respecting the construction of the Suez Canal.

I was also to give you the formal assurance that the consent of the Porte would never be given to the project until Her Majesty's Government had expressed their willingness to sanction it.²⁶

This statement from the Turkish Ministry, given formally though not in a signed statement, had considerable bearing on the course of the negotiations in 1858. It enabled English officials to point out to those favoring the canal that the Foreign Office had received an official written promise that Turkish approval would never be given the canal scheme until British consent had been secured, while at the same time the Porte could deny that such a statement had been given in writing.²⁷ All through the year 1858, in fact, rumors thickened and intrigues increased regarding the canal, due in part to ministerial and diplomatic changes in several countries and the growing effectiveness of propaganda campaigns both for and against the canal.²⁸

The fall of Palmerston in February and the accession of the Derby Ministry with Disraeli in one of the principal offices, although hailed with delight by friends of the canal, failed to make any material change in the official attitude of the British Government. Shortly after receiving word of this event, Aali Pasha, who was perhaps secretly in favor of the canal, or at least willing to oblige the Viceroy whose bountiful presents he had received, directed M. Musurus, the Turkish Envoy in London, to ascertain the views of the new cabinet with regard to the canal. Lord Malmesbury replied that "we entirely concur in the course followed by our Predecessors with regard to the projected Canal, and that we put implicit trust in the formal assurance given by the

²⁶ F. O. 78/1421, Enclosure in No. 18, Alison to Lord Clarendon, 4 Jan., 1858.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Enclosures in Alison's No. 190, 25 Feb., 1858, to Foreign Office; De Lesseps, *Lettres, Journal et Documents*, 2d Ser., p. 171.

²⁸ It was discovered, for example, that De Lesseps was receiving from the Viceroy the sum of 39,000 francs per month for advertising and propaganda uses, and that the Viceroy had paid some £20,000 to the continental press in 1857 for articles keeping the subject of the canal alive. — F. O., 78/1421, Correspondence between Consul John Green and the Foreign Office, 7, 18, and 26 Jan., 1858.

Turkish Government that the consent of the Porte would never be given to the Project until Her Majesty's Government had expressed their willingness to sanction it."²⁹

De Lesseps, who had prolonged his stay in Constantinople hoping for a favorable "break," was soon apprised of the stand of the new Ministry, touching the matter of the canal, and realized more fully than before the futility of expecting such agreements as had been reached between the British and French Governments really to change the opposition of the former. This realization became the more vivid when, on March 26, the matter of the canal was again brought up in the House of Commons by Mr. Darby Griffith. The Government's answer was given by Disraeli, who considered it "a most futile attempt, and totally impossible to be carried out"; and he added that even if it were feasible, the operation of nature would soon totally defeat the ingenuity of man.³⁰ Disraeli was cautious enough, however, to remark that the House of Commons had nothing to do with the practicability of the canal idea or with the method of its financing, leaving the inference that only in the external bearings of the canal was the British Government concerned. A new debate in the House of Commons on June 1, opened by Mr. Roebuck, brought forth only an elaboration of previous pronouncements. The warm support tendered to the canal project by various members of the House apparently made no impression on the almost fanatical hostility displayed by Stephenson, who still maintained that the canal was a "physical impossibility" and that if built it would be but a "stinking ditch,"³¹ and by Lord Palmerston, who reiterated his former objections to the whole plan, basing his opposition on the danger which would arise should the main channel of access to India lie through a narrow passage controlled by a foreign and not always friendly government. Gladstone believed that the canal offered decided advantages to Great Britain, which country, he insisted, would actually control the canal from the beginning through its naval power and its possession of strategic bases, regardless of the

²⁹ F. O. 78/1421, the Earl of Malmesbury to M. Musurus, 11 March, 1858. The words with which this statement was concluded were identical with those contained in the formal assurance given by Aali Pasha on January fourth, and were not twisted to contain a new meaning, as De Lesseps said in his *Journal*. — See his *Lettres, Journal et Documents*, 2d Ser., p. 174; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 103.

³⁰ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLIX, 849.

³¹ Robert Stephenson, *A Letter addressed to the Editor of the Austrian Gazette . . . in reply to the statements of M. de Negrelli* (London, 1858), pp. 7-17. The original engineering objection to the idea of a sea level canal had rested on the belief that a difference of some 33 feet in the levels of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean would produce a current too strong to be ascended. Stephenson based much of his disapproval on the assumption that a canal having no current flowing through it would become stagnant.

ownership of the waterway.³² Disraeli, as on an earlier occasion, was careful to say nothing which might embarrass either British representatives at the Porte or the Turkish Ministers themselves, while he attempted to avoid giving umbrage to France. His words were non-committal, but his tone was strongly inimical to the project. Being put to vote, the House overwhelmingly defeated the motion that "This House is of opinion that the power and influence of the country ought not to be employed in obliging the Sultan to withhold his assent to the project."³³

These developments brought a considerable degree of despondency to the promoters of the canal. Added to the unpromising opposition of every official branch of the English Government was the fact that the Viceroy's finances were running low and the placing of any loan abroad was certain to have an unfavorable reaction on the canal project. Certain English capitalists offered to arrange for a loan of £2,000,000 to be secured by the Suez railway, but there were objections from the French Consul and the suggestion was dropped.³⁴ Aside from this, the Austrian Government, which had strongly favored the project at an earlier date was now, with Count Buol as Foreign Minister, quite as strongly opposed. The campaign of propaganda which had been inaugurated many months earlier by De Lesseps and the Viceroy was still in full blast, but its great expense could not much longer warrant its continuation in view of official commitments.³⁵

Once again De Lesseps found himself face to face with total ruin. There was but one possible expedient remaining to be tried. To snatch what measure of success he could from recent defeats, De Lesseps returned to Paris to constitute his company for the construction of the canal. In organizing the corporation and instituting a financial policy for the sale of canal shares, De Lesseps displayed the same originality and self-confidence which had distinguished all of his previous endeavors. He entirely disregarded the counsel of capitalists, bankers, and promoters as to the best method of distributing the shares and of providing for adequate money backing for the proposed construction. He even refused

³² See John Morley, *Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London), 1903), I, 591-592.

³³ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVI, 1385-1391.

³⁴ F. O. 78/1421, John Green to Charles Alison, 24 June, 1858; *ibid.*, Green to Lord Malmesbury, 1 July and 3 July, 1878. Green, who was the successor of Bruce as Consul-General, thought that at any rate the English offer to acquire an interest in the railway would prevent the French from getting it.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 228, 5 May, 1858, Alison to Malmesbury; *ibid.*, Lord Loftus to Malmesbury, No. 250, 28 July, 1858; Husny, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-279, *passim*.

to establish subscription agencies in banking houses, although invited to do so by a firm as important as the Rothschilds, because their terms appeared exorbitant and he wished to conserve as much of the capital as possible for actual expenses of construction.³⁶

The capital of the Company was fixed at 200,000,000 francs, divided into 400,000 *actions* or shares of 500 francs each. Headquarters of the Company were established in a modest suite on the Place Vendôme, and here subscription books were opened on November 5, 1858. In spite of the fact that almost no English money was forthcoming for the venture, the shares were taken up rapidly. With the French people the canal, although advertised as an international enterprise, assumed the character of a patriotic venture because of the outspoken hostility of the British Government. De Lesseps afterward related as typical of many small subscriptions, the account of a Frenchman who approached him with a desire to purchase shares in "the railway of the Isle of Sweden." It was explained to him that the enterprise was not a railway, but a canal; not on an island, but on an isthmus; and not in Sweden, but at Suez. The subscriber was not in the least taken aback, but averred that it did not matter so long as the project was against the English.³⁷

On November 30 the subscription books were closed. All of the shares except 85,506, which were reserved for investors in England, Austria, Russia and the United States to make the enterprise truly international, had been subscribed. The major portion of the capital publicly subscribed, therefore, was French, and most of the shares were taken in small lots.³⁸ The Administrative Council of the Company was brought into existence on November 22, and by December 20, the organization of the concern was complete. The rather ponderous title of *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez* was adopted as the official designation, and statements given out concerning the completion of the organization showed it to be based on the acts of concession of 30 November, 1854, and 5 January, 1856, which had been issued by the Viceroy of Egypt.³⁹

Even the successful launching of the Canal Company failed to make any material change in the political status of the project. While it gave De Lesseps the advantage of a strong organization,

³⁶ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 119; Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

³⁷ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 120; J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez*, I, 286-287.

³⁸ *The Nation*, LXX, 7.

³⁹ De Lesseps, *Lettres, Journal et Documents*, 2d Ser., pp. 408-411; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, Annexe No. 16, 453-468.

a large working capital and the moral support of a tangible accomplishment of no mean sort, it also gave his enemies new means of attack. Before the Company was formed, De Lesseps had been in a sense out of reach; the French Government assumed no responsibility for his actions since he acted merely as the agent of the Viceroy. As the head of a large corporation, however, the projector was a fair mark. His obligations were no longer primarily to the Viceroy, but to his stockholders.⁴⁰ The Viceroy could therefore be threatened with the dangers he had incurred from bringing a Frankenstein's monster into existence by chartering a corporation, without the consent of his liege lord, and endowing it with almost sovereign rights, while the Sultan himself was constantly reminded of the growing likelihood of the severing of Egypt from the Turkish Empire by the labors of a French concern.

The intrigues fostered by England only increased, therefore, with the rise of the Canal Company, and it appeared as unlikely at the beginning of 1859 as at any previous time that the canal would ever be constructed by a company controlled in France. The English Consul in Egypt, Mr. F. W. A. Bruce, who had complained a few years earlier that he was the only European in Egypt not in favor of the canal,⁴¹ had already been supplanted by the more aggressive, if less tactful, John Green,⁴² and the influence of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe still held sway at the Porte. It is to the great credit of Saïd Pasha that he did not altogether desert the canal scheme during these trying times, as he must have been tempted to do. He did so far weaken under the constant pressure as to make pretense of having withdrawn his support, although what he openly did to obstruct the preparations of De Lesseps for continuing with the work he atoned for by lending secret assistance.⁴³

It was under such circumstances as these that De Lesseps took another bold step and created another problem. Years before he had argued, in urging the Viceroy to authorize the commencement of work on the canal, that the enterprise was a purely local and internal one, and as such did not require the sanction of the Porte. This position had then appeared to be untenable not only because of the protests of the Turkish Ministers, egged on by the British Foreign Office, but because of the reluctance of the Pasha him-

⁴⁰ F. de Lesseps, *Conférences de la rue de la Paix; entretiens sur le canal de Suez* (Paris, 1864), p. 52.

⁴¹ F. O. 78/1340, Bruce to Lord Clarendon, Nov. 26, 1856.

⁴² This is evident in the correspondence between Green and the Foreign Office in December, 1859, in which Green reported his conversations with the Viceroy.

⁴³ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 129-131, 137, *passim*; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 294-297.

self to proceed with such a doubtful matter. Now, however, De Lesseps found it possible to make a distinction between the canal as an engineering task and the completed waterway as an international highway. In the acts of concession and the empty words of approval uttered at times from the Turkish divan he found sufficient authorization for undertaking the construction of the canal, while, reversing his former attitude, he encouraged the settlement of the political status of the completed work by an international congress. De Lesseps now gave over his former character of diplomat and assumed that of president of a commercial corporation whose sole task was to construct a navigable waterway, leaving to others the problems which might issue therefrom.

Accordingly, in March, 1859, representatives of the Company officially took possession of the properties given up in the acts of concession, and in April De Lesseps recruited such labor as he could find in Egypt, rented a small government steamer, and set out for the Isthmus to begin actual construction. The line of the Fresh Water Canal, a necessary preliminary to the main operation, had been marked out in May, 1857,⁴⁴ but the first stroke on the deep-sea canal itself was delayed until April 25, 1859, when construction began on the Mediterranean terminus at Port Saïd.⁴⁵ Although little progress could be made for some time to come, owing to the Pasha's fear of allowing the work to proceed, the knowledge that earth had been turned and contracts let created a storm of opposition both in Egypt and at Constantinople.

The English diplomatic agents did good fishing in the troubled waters. Believing the Viceroy piqued because De Lesseps conducted himself as the sole promoter of the project, now that the Company had been formed, no opportunity was lost in Egypt by opponents of the canal of emphasizing the dangers which would arise from the entrenchment of a vast French enterprise in Egypt and the political motives which had undoubtedly guided the whole canal venture.⁴⁶ Likewise at the Porte, old dangers and new, accompanied by scarcely veiled threats, were urged upon the harassed Ministers, until they were ready to take the rather delicate step of intervening in Egypt in order to stop construction work.⁴⁷ In these efforts Britain was strongly seconded by Austria, whose Internuncio was now thoroughly convinced that De Lesseps was

⁴⁴ F. O. 78/1340, Green to Lord Clarendon, No. 8, May 27, 1857.

⁴⁵ De Lesseps, *Lettres, Journal et Documents*, 2d Ser., pp. 42, 84-91. This port, it is needless to say, was so called in honor of the Pasha.

⁴⁶ F. O., Suez Canal Papers, 78/1555, A. S. Walne to Lord Malmesbury, 25 May, 1859.

⁴⁷ F. O. 78/1555, Telegram from Sir Henry Bulwer to Lord Malmesbury, 19 May, 1859.

nothing more than a French agent aiming at the independence of Egypt.⁴⁸ As a result of these representations, the Porte addressed a note to the Viceroy under date of June first, instructing him to have work suspended on the Isthmus pending the formal sanction of the Porte.⁴⁹ A few days later this was followed by an official order from the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chérif Pasha, to De Lesseps to cease the operations which he had begun on the Isthmus.⁵⁰

Within a few weeks, however, it developed that although De Lesseps had been instructed to suspend his labors, the Egyptian Government had failed to recall the workmen he had enlisted and was oblivious to the fact that construction was still continuing. Reproached with his lack of decisive action, Saïd replied that those who were engaged in work on the canal at that time were Europeans and he had no control over them. Their own governments, he pointed out, must do the recalling, and the Pasha must have smiled to think that as the Europeans referred to were Frenchmen, there was little likelihood of their being withdrawn.⁵¹ Foiled at this point, the British Consul could only hope that the annual flood of the Nile would be strong enough to inundate the scene of the canal operations and thus defeat the French engineers.

The passive fashion with which the Viceroy thus observed the continuation of the canal enterprise did not fail to give umbrage at the two points where British diplomacy was mobilized to thwart the project. In Egypt the Viceroy was reminded anew of the hazard of permitting a proposed French colony to be developed in the Wady Toumilat lately acquired by the Company. This, it was pointed out, would be a double danger. In the first place, it would perpetually threaten the existence of Egypt and in the second place, it would be a dangerous obstacle in the way of British access to India.⁵² The British Ambassador at the Porte was no less zealous in picturing the ruin that was daily courted by the Viceroy. He saw the projected French colony in the region adjacent to the line of the canal as a permanent barrier between Turkey and Egypt, a proof that the motive behind the Suez Canal Company was that of detaching Egypt from the Ottoman Empire. Such an event, he pointed out, would dangerously undermine the finances of the Turkish Government, as a considerable portion of the Ottoman debt was secured by the Egyptian revenues. The

⁴⁸ Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

⁴⁹ F. O. 78/1555, Sir Henry Bulwer to Lord Malmesbury, 3 June, 1859.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Walne to Lord Malmesbury, 10 June, 1859.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1 July and 10 July, 1859.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Walne to Lord Russell, 21 July, 1859.

concern of Great Britain in such developments was emphatically restated.⁵⁸

Again British diplomatic pressure promised to bear fruit. On September 19, the Grand Vizier addressed a note to Saïd informing him that the building of the canal was a matter within the jurisdiction of the Sultan, who regarded the acts of concession issued by the Viceroy to the Canal Company as null and void. Saïd was, therefore, to stop all work on the canal since it was altogether unauthorized.⁵⁹ Upon the receipt of this letter, the Viceroy appeared to be convinced of the futility of longer dallying with the canal project. On the fourth of October all of the foreign envoys in Egypt were summoned to a conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Here the assembled diplomats were addressed by Chérif Pasha on the subject of the instructions from the Porte and were informed of his master's determination of carrying out the orders at all hazards. This resolution was unanimously approved by the diplomatic corps and was duly communicated to their respective governments.⁶⁰ The canal at last appeared to be definitely defeated.

There remained but one forlorn hope if the project was to be saved. If the Emperor Napoleon, who had repeatedly shown himself in favor of the canal, could be prevailed upon to espouse it openly and officially, all might not yet be lost. The political situation in Europe, with France at war with Austria, who had been opposing the scheme, was more favorable than for years past. Toward the end of July, therefore, De Lesseps returned to Paris to beg for the active support of the Emperor in behalf of the funds subscribed by the French people. Here at last his efforts were crowned with success. The Emperor went to the length not only of promising protection but of instructing his diplomatic corps to give active assistance at their respective posts. As an indication of the genuineness of this change of policy, M. Sabatier, the French consul in Egypt, whose opposition to De Lesseps and the canal had been real, was recalled.⁶¹

The Emperor still hoped to avert a breach with England over the matter of the canal. Count Walewski, the Foreign Minister, was instructed to convey to the British Cabinet the hope that English opposition to the enterprise might at last cease.⁶² The

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Sir Henry Bulwer to Lord Russell, 16 Aug., 1859.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 20 Sept., 1859; Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Colquhoun to Sir Henry Bulwer, 6 Oct., 1859. Even the French Consul raised no objection to the abandonment of the canal plan. See the *Quarterly Review*, CLXV, 439.

⁶¹ De Lesseps, *Lettres, Journal et Documents*, 3d Ser., pp. 192-240.

⁶² F. O. 78/1555, Lord Cowley to Lord Russell, 9 Oct., 1859.

British Foreign Office, however, quickly quashed any such hopes by reiterating its hostility to the carrying out of canal plans.⁵⁸ This uncompromising attitude at a time when the two countries were trying to maintain the semblance of an alliance might have proved as fatal to the canal as the opposition of France had to the Euphrates Valley Railway had not matters taken a more favorable turn elsewhere. In concluding terms of peace with France, the Austrian Government pledged its support anew to the canal undertaking and promised diplomatic aid at the Porte, despite English attempts to defeat the agreement.⁵⁹ Presently Russia also joined with the two Powers to bring pressure to bear at the Porte favorable to the granting of the desired *firman* to the Suez Canal Company and for reaching international agreements on the political questions involved.⁶⁰

These developments centring in Constantinople, where the Sultan and his Ministers trembled at the insistence of the co-operating Powers on the one hand and the threat of the withdrawal of British friendship and support on the other, had the effect of shifting the scene of British operations again to Cairo. There the English Consul opportunely found a new source of objection to the construction operations in the application of the *corvée* or forced labor system to the carrying out of digging operations. This, he submitted, was contrary to civilized practice and altogether iniquitous,⁶¹ although but a few years before one of his predecessors in Egypt had urged upon the Viceroy this very measure during the construction of the Suez Railway. Still, the cry of virtual slavery in Egypt promised to supply an excellent *casus belli*, and it was later employed most effectively.

In January, 1860, a new set of instructions were sent by the British Foreign Office to Sir Henry Bulwer at Constantinople bearing on the situation. He was to point out once more to the Turkish Ministers the lack of need for the canal in view of the Suez Railway, the dangers to be incurred by Egypt, Turkey, and Great Britain should a canal be opened, and the certainty of the withdrawal of British friendship from the Porte in case of the completion of the waterway.⁶² No secret was made of the fact that the major portion of this hostility to the enterprise was due

⁵⁸ F. O. 78/1555, Russell to Cowley, 14 Oct., 1859.

⁵⁹ Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

⁶⁰ F. O. 78/1555, Correspondence between Lord Russell and Sir Henry Bulwer, Nov. and Dec., 1859.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Colquhoun to Lord Russell, 9 Dec., 1859.

⁶² F. O., Suez Canal Papers, 78/1556, Foreign Office to Sir Henry Bulwer, No. 44, 21 Jan., 1860; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CLVI, 1354.

to the fear that France would become entrenched in Egypt on the route to India.⁶³ Finding that all of these objections were still of no avail in ending construction work, Sir Henry Bulwer, with the approval of his Government, even went to the point a few months later of representing that the Viceroy had no legal right to employ the funds of Egypt in behalf of the enterprise, and intimated that as he had forfeited the conditions under which he held the government of Egypt, he might well be deposed by the Porte.⁶⁴ Such a suggestion, coming at a time when France was hastily landing armed forces in Syria to oppose Turkish disorders, carried with it considerable weight.

Even the possibility of being removed failed seriously to shake the resolution of Saïd Pasha to proceed with the digging of the canal. "I do not know," he said to the English Consul on one occasion, "if this affair will be advantageous from a commercial point of view, but I am sure that my name will be immortalised if the canal project is achieved under my reign and with my assistance."⁶⁵ The sending of a high Turkish functionary to Egypt at the instance of British agencies to remonstrate with Saïd and to emphasize the dangers he was incurring, failed to shake his determination. He would yield, he said, only to force, and he relied on the friendly attitude of France, Austria, and other Powers to avert the use of force.⁶⁶ The canal therefore was suffered to gain momentum, though rather slowly, because of the Pasha's judicious reserve in supplying laborers in great numbers.⁶⁷

With the affairs in this highly unsatisfactory state, months passed by with no sign of material change. The Viceroy, still loyal to the enterprise which he regarded as his own, supplied such assistance as political exigencies and the gravely depressed state of his finances would allow, although embarrassed on every hand. De Lesseps continued to receive the support of the French Emperor, though often in very halting fashion. And the tone of hostility in England varied only as the consummation of the canal seemed less and less likely and the scheme appeared contemptible rather than directly dangerous. The question of forced labor continued to receive the attention of the British Government. "The slavery of America," it was asserted in the House of Commons in

⁶³ Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 293; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CLVI, 1354; *ibid.*, CLVII, 221-222.

⁶⁴ F. O. 78/1556, Sir H. Bulwer to the Foreign Office, 15 June, 1860. See *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CLXXII, 1550-1559; *London Times*, 6 June, 1861.

⁶⁵ F. O. 78/1556, Colquhoun to the Foreign Office, No. 66, 3 June, 1860.

⁶⁶ Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 296; *London Times*, 30 Oct., 1861.

⁶⁷ Husny, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-297; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CLXXIII, 1458-1459, 1562; *ibid.*, CLXXIV, 1822; *London Times*, 3 and 12 May, 1862.

1862, "was not so bad as that of the forced labour that was being employed on this canal."⁶⁸ It was maintained that the laborers were made to serve without pay for long periods of time and that a huge number were being employed on the canal works at all times.⁶⁹ In November, 1862, Sir Henry Bulwer was sent from Constantinople to examine the state of the canal. He found the forward state of operations on the canal a matter of surprise, but assured the diplomatic corps that England could never consent to the entrenchment of another great Power along the line of the canal, and maintained that, in that respect, the best interests of Egypt and Great Britain coincided.⁷⁰

The next phase in the history of canal operations was introduced by the death of Saïd Pasha on January 18, 1863, and the accession of his nephew, Ismaïl. To this Prince it appeared that his predecessors had been altogether too absorbed in the canal for its own sake to take sufficient precautions for the interests of his country. "No one is more in favor of the canal than I," he said, "but I wish the canal for the sake of Egypt, and not Egypt for the canal."⁷¹ Nevertheless, at the outset of his reign he accepted obligations to the canal enterprise much as he found them, although he preserved a reticence regarding his plans and policies worthy of many a western statesman. Being ambitious, the magnitude of the work appealed to him, and its regenerative influence on much of Egypt could not be denied. Yet he was not prepared to make great sacrifices, and he hoped to recover much of the land which had been so extravagantly ceded to the Company by Saïd. In all such matters he readily admitted the necessity of being guided by the Porte.

Such an attitude could not fail to give joy in British circles, and no time was lost in searching for means of exploiting the loyalty of the Viceroy to his liege in order to ruin the efforts of the Canal Company. At this juncture, Sir Henry Bulwer came forward with a ready-made plan well designed to accomplish the subversive purpose in hand. His scheme, in brief, was to undermine the Canal Company by having a pronouncement made by the Porte that, as the Acts of Concession issued by Saïd had never been of-

⁶⁸ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CLXVIII, 1147; *ibid.*, CLXVI, 1821-1824; *ibid.*, CLXX, 1723-1724.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, CLXVIII, 148; *ibid.*, CLXIX, 577-578; *ibid.*, CLXX, 1770; *ibid.*, CLXXI, 804; Pierre Crabitès, "Ferdinand de Lesseps and the Suez Canal," in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (Oct., 1926), p. 592. It was suggested that, in view of the cotton famine in England resulting from the American Civil War, the Egyptian fellahs could have been employed to much better advantage in raising cotton.

⁷⁰ Husny, *op. cit.*, pp. 299, 300.

⁷¹ Quoted in Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 336.

ficially approved, the Suez Canal Company had no standing in Egypt and no authority to proceed with construction work. Ismail was thereupon expected to hand in an unfavorable report on the dangers which would be incurred by Egypt and the Empire in case the canal were completed, whereupon he would receive instructions to terminate the work immediately.

This plan was duly communicated to the Porte, where it was considered in the customary leisurely manner. Finally in July, 1863, the ultimatum of the Porte, a modified version of the English proposal, was despatched to the Viceroy. He was no longer to permit forced labor on the canal under any circumstances; the lands alienated to the Company by Saïd for the purpose of irrigation and colonization were to be repurchased by Ismaïl and distributed to Egyptian subjects; and the canal itself, if completed, was to be of a depth which would admit merchant vessels, but not vessels of war. In case the Company did not accept these conditions, it was to be dissolved, its shareholders compensated, and the canal executed directly under the auspices of the Egyptian Government.⁷² The Company was accorded a period of six months in which to accept or reject these conditions. Meanwhile its operations were practically suspended.

The terms thus imposed upon the Canal Company were little pleasing to Austria and France. The Austrian Ambassador at the Porte, who protested against such unfair measures, was informed by the British Ambassador that Britain had no wish to oppose the wishes of all of Europe in the matter of the canal, but that she was determined to thwart the military aims of France in this regard.⁷³ Such half-hearted admission of the commercial utility of the canal only slightly reflected the conviction which had by this time taken root in England that eventually the canal would be built. As time passed and it became less likely that the canal itself would prove to be a French military entrenchment and while the actual need of a commercial channel continued to grow, British authorities began to bow to the inevitable and to look toward the day when the canal, under one control or another, must become *un fait accompli*. Such an admission was doubtless influenced by the attitude of the commercial classes in England, who had favored the canal on commercial grounds, ever since it was first projected; but the day when official opposition would be lifted was yet postponed, partly because of unwillingness to reverse a traditional policy, but more particularly because of the known imperialistic tendencies of the French Emperor.

Already, in May, 1863, significant steps had been taken to-

⁷² Husny, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

ward constructing at Malta a new port possessing greatly enlarged harbor and docking facilities. Construction plans aimed at providing a haven which would care for a large and modern Mediterranean fleet. New fortifications were put under construction which would offer ample security to vessels at anchor. Extensive funds for the work were asked for from the Maltese Government, and the request was supported by a picture of the prosperity which would presently ensue from the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez and the considerable augmentation of shipping in the eastern Mediterranean.⁷⁴

The six months' respite granted the Company was employed by its Council in trying to avert the impending disaster. It still appeared possible, by the intervention and arbitration of the French Emperor, to secure better terms from the Sultan. An appeal was made to the Emperor, therefore, in the name of French investors, and although Napoleon was little disposed to become embroiled in the difficulty, he could little afford to ignore the appeal which the Porte authorized the Company to make.⁷⁵ In consequence, a commission of arbitration was nominated early in March, 1864, which sat until July. The award as made by the Emperor was calculated to determine the Company's status in Egypt once and for all and to remove any existing grounds for withholding the *firman* of approval by the Porte. It provided that the Company should no longer have the right of demanding laborers from the Viceroy, who was to give compensation for the termination of this claim to the amount of £1,520,000. All lands owned by the Company on the Isthmus, except such as were necessary for the operation of the canal, and all subsidiary canals were to be relinquished to the Viceroy, who was to give compensation for all these assets to the total extent of £1,840,000, payable in annuities.⁷⁶ The whole indemnity thus amounted to more than three million pounds sterling — not an excessive amount for all that was to be given up, but one badly needed, in view of the poor financial condition of the Company, for the carrying on of construction work.

Considerable negotiation was required before all of the details of settlement were arranged, but before the end of the year all of the papers had been passed between the Company and the Viceroy, and only the formal approval of the Porte was lacking.

⁷⁴ Husny, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

⁷⁵ De Lesscps, *Lettres, Journal, et Documents*, 4th Ser., p. 422; *London Times*, 9 and 16 March, 1864.

⁷⁶ The documents pertaining to this settlement are to be found in *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, Egypt No. 6. See also Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 325-328; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, Annexe No. 19, 476-489; *London Times*, 3 Aug., 1864.

Even now this essential document was not forthcoming; British objections and influence still stood in the way.⁷⁷ In order to be able to continue their work at all, the Company again appealed to the French Emperor for support in February, 1865.⁷⁸ This obtained a moral advantage for the Company, but it was not until February 22, 1866, that the Porte reached an agreement with the Viceroy regarding the terms of the French Emperor's award, and another month had almost elapsed before the definitive *firman* of approval was issued, March 19, for the execution of the canal.⁷⁹ This official sanction, which had been sought for more than a decade and had been the subject of infinite diplomatic difficulties, came at last only when the construction of the canal had reached an advanced state. It ran, in part:

The realization of the great work destined to give new facilities to commerce and for navigation by the cutting of a Canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea being one of the most desirable events in this age of science and of progress, conferences have been had for some time past with the Company which asks authority to execute this work, and they have ended in a manner conformable, as regards the present and the future, with the sacred rights of the Porte, as well as with those of the Egyptian Government.

The agreement . . . has been drawn up and signed by the Egyptian Government, in conjunction with the representatives of the Company; it has been submitted for Our Imperial sanction, and, after having read it, we have given Our assent to it.⁸⁰

This at last swept the way practically free of political obstacles. Not until this document had been issued was the Company certain to succeed in its efforts. Now that the canal was assured, and in no great time, British opposition gradually ceased and thought was given to ways of turning the new waterway to imperial account. In place of the hope that the canal would never be built rose the hope that it might be placed under international control to prevent its becoming a political question once it was in operation.⁸¹ Toward this end the British Foreign Office labored until a hap-

⁷⁷ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CLXXIV, 870; *ibid.*, CLXXVII, 1759-1760.

⁷⁸ De Lesseps, *Lettres, Journal et Documents*, 5th Ser., p. 88.

⁷⁹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, LVI, 293-294; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, Annexe No. 20, 490; *London Times*, 21 Feb., 1866.

⁸⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1415]; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 333.

⁸¹ C. de Freycinet, *La Question d'Égypte* (Paris, 1904), pp. 126, 127; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXVII, 664-665.

pier solution suddenly made its appearance, namely, the bringing of the canal under the immediate control of Great Britain.

Preliminary surveys of the Isthmus of Suez made in 1847 and in 1855-1856, had indicated that a sea level canal was altogether practicable, not only because there was no essential difference in the levels of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, but because the character of the Isthmus itself was well adapted for a direct and open cut. The distance across the Isthmus in a direct line was some seventy miles. In all of this distance no natural obstructions of any importance were to be found, either sand or fluvial deposits prevailing along the whole line. There was abundant evidence that at an earlier geological era the Red and Mediterranean Seas were joined across what is now the Isthmus, and with their recedence left a narrow valley, a part of which was then occupied by salt marshes and lakes and the remainder by a waterless sandy plain which extended into Egypt on the one hand and into Asia on the other. The line finally selected for the course of the canal was plainly indicated by nature by providing a natural depression for almost the whole of the way from the Mediterranean Sea. Along this line, which intersected a series of ancient lake basins but did not lie directly across the Isthmus, there were few elevations of importance, and none of these was of stone formation. Some of the few elevations appeared to be the result of seismic disturbances, while others were merely sand hills which had long since ceased to be moving sand dunes.⁸²

One of the greatest problems to be solved in undertaking the cutting of a sea-level canal across the Isthmus was not found on the land at all, but along the shores adjacent to the logical termini of an isthmian channel. As the land was low in elevation, so the seas were shallow for a considerable distance from shore. In both seas the floors proximate to the land consisted largely of soft mud or of easily shifting sand, offering no mean engineering problem in connection with adequate approaches to the canal proper. In the Mediterranean Sea, in addition, strong currents and the action of heavy seas supplied a large measure of difficulty. It was these marine obstacles, in fact, which furnished opponents of the canal with much of their assurance that an isthmian sea-level channel was either impossible or altogether impracticable, and it was on this point that De Lesseps had most expert advice. The International Scientific Commission, after taking careful note of all these difficulties, were of opinion that they could be satisfactorily overcome by the building of long stone breakwaters and by dint

⁸² *Report and Plan of the International Scientific Commission*, pp. 51-61.

of considerable dredging.⁸³ Engineering plans for the canal were practically complete, therefore, for two or three years before actual digging was commenced.

In March, 1859, soon after the formation of the Isthmus of Suez Canal Company, a new and complete exploration of the Isthmus was begun by De Lesseps and a few assistants preparatory to making a formal beginning on construction work. Although carried out under many dangers and difficulties, the findings were not unfavorable. A few months later, on August 25, De Lesseps, on behalf of the Suez Canal Company, turned the first soil for the construction of a port on the Mediterranean and so inaugurated the gigantic task. A great deal of preliminary work had to be carried out before the digging of the huge trench could proceed. Machinery had to be designed, made, shipped, and set up along the canal. Machine and repair shops were needed. Workmen's quarters had to be established, and the details of superintendence, feeding, giving medical attention, paying, and recruiting had to be worked out with very little experience to serve as guide.

Construction began from the Mediterranean, as the first requisite was a port through which to receive various necessary supplies. The first structures at Port Saïd were temporary, being replaced gradually by more permanent works as the project advanced. Drafts of Egyptian fellahs were supplied by the Egyptian Government and frequently were cared for, if they can be said to have been cared for at all, by their chiefs. While they were so employed they were paid from six to eight piastres ($1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 francs) per day, although skilled workmen received more. The question of food was prominent at the outset, but that of drinking water was considerably greater, as all had to be brought from a distance, usually on the backs of camels. Occasionally the supply failed, and it was rumored now and then, perhaps with considerable truth, that many of the fellahs perished for lack of water.⁸⁴ This problem vanished, however, with the completion of the Fresh Water Canal between the Nile and Ismaïlia in 1862, by which time as many as 25,000 or more native workmen were being employed.⁸⁵

Much of the early work was performed by hand labor, this being cheap and plentiful and machinery being expensive and poorly designed. As the work progressed, however, more and more machinery was employed and with constantly increasing efficiency.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70, *passim*; Nourse, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁸⁴ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 282-284, *passim*.

⁸⁵ Nourse, *op. cit.*, p. 52; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 330 *et passim*; London Times, 28 Nov., 1862.

After the withdrawal of fellah labor in 1863, the expense of excavation mounted so rapidly that machinery was employed on a large scale, it having been found more reasonable than hired free labor. Machine design rapidly improved under such circumstances, naturally, and early mistakes and failures were eliminated as the work advanced. Before the completion of the work in 1869 the Company had at work numbers of dredges and excavators capable of removing a total of 2,000,000 cubic metres of material per month. To accomplish this required the services of less than 4000 men, in contrast with the much greater numbers employed earlier. Toward the close of operations the machinery of various kinds employed represented a total of 10,000 horsepower,⁸⁶ not an impressive total as compared with more recent enterprises, but a matter of wonder for the world at that time.

The line of work in general proceeded from the Mediterranean toward the Red Sea, although toward the end operations were being carried on at various points simultaneously. Immediately back of Port Saïd lay the immense basin of Lake Menzaleh, and here dredging began not long after the foundations for a port had been laid on the Mediterranean. Shortly afterward work began on cuttings to connect Lake Timsah with the waters of the Mediterranean, and the entire line of the canal was well outlined before the death of Saïd Pasha and consequent political intervention led to the withdrawal of 20,000 laborers almost in a day. A notable event near the close of the year 1862 was the passage of small boats bearing various kinds of supplies from the Mediterranean into Lake Timsah.⁸⁷ But at this point the work received a serious setback, and during the next two years little was accomplished.

In November and December of 1862 a noted English engineer, Mr. John Hawkshaw, made a thorough inspection of the entire line of the canal at the invitation of the Viceroy. His *Report*, published in 1863, presented a detailed and unbiased account of the work accomplished and the difficulties remaining to be surmounted.⁸⁸ His findings, on the whole, were favorable to the consummation of the project, although he did not share the optimism of some of the Company's engineers as to the time within which the work could be completed. His report is the more noteworthy because it completely refuted the arguments advanced by many of his countrymen, and particularly his fellow engineer, Robert Stephenson, purporting to prove that the canal was not

⁸⁶ Nourse, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; *Edinburgh Review*, CVII, 450 ff.

⁸⁷ *Calcutta Review*, XXXVIII, 351.

⁸⁸ *Report of John Hawkshaw, F. R. S., to the Egyptian Government* (London, 1863); Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 332 f.

feasible, and, if once constructed, could not be kept open. The influence of the report was widespread and considerable. It gave the new Viceroy a more favorable impression of the work than he had had previously, and it went far toward convincing members of the British Government that the canal would be completed. But even this analysis failed to convince all doubting Thomases. "We cannot persuade ourselves," said the Editor of the *Calcutta Review*, after a lengthy examination of the report, "that an investment in the Suez Canal would be a safe speculation, and we think that the fact so much dwelt upon by French writers, that no Englishmen have taken shares, may be attributed rather to English commercial prudence than to national jealousy."⁸⁹

Rapid progress in excavating was made after the first of 1865. With the end of political difficulties in sight and plenty of money in hand from the award made to the Company by the arbitration of Napoleon III, the works were everywhere pushed rapidly. All of Europe received a thrill when it was announced near the close of the year that a steamer drawing four metres of water had passed from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, although part of the voyage had been made by way of subsidiary canals.⁹⁰ A branch of the Fresh Water Canal also was approaching Suez and facilitating the progress on the main trench accordingly. Various vessels drawing several feet of water passed through the canal in 1866. During the next two years thriving towns sprang up along the course of the canal where formerly had been only desolation. Port Saïd took on the appearance of a thriving, populous seaport, with many permanent buildings raised high on lands recently dredged from the canal entrance. At the intersection of the Fresh Water Canal with the main channel another new town sprang into existence, called after the reigning Viceroy Ismailia. By the time of the opening of the canal it had become a busy metropolis of six thousand inhabitants, containing the pretentious residences of many of those charged with building the canal. Even Suez had recovered much of its ancient size and importance. Being but a miserable, squalid, sun-baked village for centuries after the opening up of the Cape route to the East, it had experienced a mild revival with the establishment of the English overland route in the thirties and forties. The completion of the Suez railway in 1858 had contributed further to the growth and importance of the place, and with the erection of warehouses, hotels, and docks, the place had sloughed off much of the deserted air of earlier times. Still, it was the completion of the Suez branch of

⁸⁹ *Calcutta Review*, XXXVIII, 363.

⁹⁰ Nourse, *op. cit.*, p. 70; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 9, 10.

the Fresh Water Canal which gave the spot a transforming touch and turned a baked desert into a blooming garden. From a village of a few thousand inhabitants it had in 1869 become an industrious and cosmopolitan town of some twenty-five thousand souls, such was the magic of the canal.⁹¹

The near completion of the canal was signalized by the admission of the waters of the Mediterranean Sea into the Bitter Lakes, whose salt basin, having no outlet, was well below sea level. This operation was made a matter of ceremony, the sluices from the dammed-up canal being opened in the presence of the Viceroy, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other notables, on March 18, 1869. Only one remaining barrier separated the two seas, and this was rapidly reduced. Many weeks before the event, De Lesseps gave notice of the formal opening of the canal on November 17, and invited the commercial world to make use of the waterway after that date, all vessels to be passed free of charge during a period of four days after the opening. To this general announcement personal invitations to most of the crowned heads of Europe were added by Ismail, who was making a grand tour of the continent during the summer of 1869.⁹² The projector was hard put to it to maintain his schedule; many obstructions still remained until the very hour of the opening, and the failure to remove any one of them would have vitiated the elaborate ceremonies arranged for the occasion and would have drawn a storm of criticism and ridicule from all parts of Europe. Only the foresight and undaunted courage of De Lesseps made possible the conquering of one unexpected difficulty after another, until on November 17 an open channel welcomed the ceremonial fleet which slowly steamed through the new waterway in the procession of initiation.⁹³

On November 17 stood ready that "second Bosphorus" which had set all of western Europe by the ears since the first proposals of its projector in 1852. The consuming ambition of one of the century's remarkable men was at last realized; his great plan, which had been almost universally scoffed at, denounced and be-

⁹¹ Captain Clerk, in the *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1869, quoted in Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 196-198. See Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 355-378.

⁹² A. E. P. B. Weigall, *A History of Events in Egypt from 1798 to 1914*, pp. 100 ff.; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 388-390; *London Times*, 5 June, 1869.

⁹³ De Lesseps did not consider the inauguration of the canal complete until he had acknowledged his indebtedness to Thomas Waghorn, from whom he obtained some of his early ideas for a canal, by erecting on a jetty at Port Saïd a large bust of this apostle of the overland route executed by M. Vital-Dubray. This was in place by the end of 1869. — *London Illustrated Times*, 8 Jan., 1870, p. 20; *The Graphic*, 8 Jan., 1870, p. 140.

littled by men in all walks of life and in nearly all countries, had justified itself. A multitude of obstacles, political, personal, financial, and physical, had all been conquered by the strength of one man, and at last the hero received the meed of honor that was due him. Friend and enemy alike gave unstinted praise to the man who could not accept defeat, but must needs turn defeat into victory.

The victory, moreover, was impressive. A great channel had been dug through deserts and salt marshes where the treacherous Bedouins had once made up the whole of the human population. Roads and harbors on the Mediterranean coast were built where natural facilities had been entirely lacking. All supplies and every drop of fresh water had been brought laboriously from great distances. The interminable tropic sun had precluded the possibility of employing European labor extensively. Yet through this desert wilderness a sea level ship canal had been constructed for the commerce of the world, a canal which measured approximately ninety miles in length.⁹⁴ Nowhere was the depth of water less than twenty-six feet or the width less than seventy-two feet at the bottom of the cut. This was sufficient width for but one vessel only, but ships were enabled to pass each other in opposite directions in the lakes and in sections of double width, sidings or *gares*, in other parts of the canal.⁹⁵ A system of signals along the whole of the canal gave notice of traffic conditions. Ports had been provided at either end capable of caring for large numbers of vessels, with docking facilities and fuel and water supplies. Lighthouses marked either entrance of the canal. For the construction of this great waterway an international corporation had been formed, capable of supplying the 200,000,000 francs necessary for actual construction expenses, in addition to possibly 100,000,000 francs more which had been required for various political and promotion or "incidental" expenses.⁹⁶ On these sums interest at 5% had been paid from the date of the formation of the Company.

The service rendered by this notable accomplishment is partially indicated by the reduction of mileage and time-distances between western and eastern ports. The distance from Southampton to Point de Galle around the Cape of Good Hope was approximately 11,650 miles. The canal reduced this distance to

⁹⁴ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 218. Including the harbor works and approaches at either end, the canal has a length of more than 92 miles.

⁹⁵ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 224-225, 252-253; *Calcutta Review*, XXXVIII, 348.

⁹⁶ This was the estimate by M. Fontane, one of the Company's officers; quoted in Nourse, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11. See Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 66; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, Annexe No. 23, 501-505.

about 6,515 miles, effecting a saving of 5,135 miles.⁹⁷ This, translated into terms of time and fuel economy, represented a very large saving. The reduction in time for vessels sailing from England to India varied according to size and power of vessel, route taken around the Cape, and other factors, but conservative estimates placed the saving due to the canal at from fifty-one to sixty-seven days.⁹⁸ The cost of passage between England and India was also materially reduced by the canal route. In 1843 at the opening of the overland route a voyage to India cost about £140. By 1866, after the completion of the Suez Railway and the organization of the Egyptian Transit Administration, the cost had been reduced to slightly less than £100, but further reductions were not in sight as long as the passage remained overland through Egypt. In 1875, however, a passage to India cost but £68 by way of the canal, and the canal toll of 10 francs per passenger was only about one-tenth of the overland fare through Egypt at that time.⁹⁹

In view of the potentialities opened up by the new waterway, it was highly fitting that the formal opening should be made the occasion for a brilliant international gathering representing most of the western nations. Months before the date of the opening mammoth preparations were put under way. The officers of the Company were determined that nothing should be left undone to emphasize the importance of the work or its international character. The Viceroy was equally resolved that his hospitality and the greatness of his country should not be called in question. Even the desert Arabs, who scarcely owned any superior authority, encamped in thousands on the banks of the canal to extend the "hospitality of the tent," and incidentally to witness a great spectacle and to gather in such gratuities as appreciative visitors might shower upon them. The guest of honor was the individual who had given De Lesseps the most encouragement and tangible help during the dark hours of his enterprise, the Empress Eugénie. She might well speak of the canal as "our" labor.¹⁰⁰ Other notables, who arrived just prior to the opening, were the Emperor of Austria, the Crown Prince of Prussia, Grand Duke Michael of Russia, the Prince and Princess of Holland, and a brilliant staff

⁹⁷ From a table in Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 236. See the table of distances in Nourse, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁹⁸ *Calcutta Review*, XXXVIII, 361. It was also stated by a French naval officer that whenever the use of the canal would effect a saving of 24 days or more over the Cape route, the saving in fuel and time would make the canal route the more profitable.

⁹⁹ See Nourse, *op. cit.*, p. 58; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, I, 237-240. As for actual time in transit through Egypt, the canal produced no saving over the railway route, but in either instance the time was short, and this item was inconsiderable.

¹⁰⁰ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 39, 40.

of French, Prussian, Russian, Austrian, and Egyptian officers, with other guests, to the number of 6000. Great Britain was officially represented by Mr. Henry Elliott, British Ambassador to Turkey, who was supported by several units of the British Mediterranean fleet.¹⁰¹ French, Austrian, Italian steamships and a miscellaneous group of vessels from other nations comprised an impressive and colorful background for the program in hand. The United States was the only western nation of any considerable size not represented by delegate or vessel.

Three days were employed by the marine procession, led by the Empress Eugénie in the French imperial yacht *Aigle*, in passing through the canal. This part of the ceremonies was interspersed with most elaborate entertainment at Ismaïlia, on which the Viceroy had lavished his money without stint. A measure of suspense and excitement attended the passage of the canal by the two score of steam vessels because of the knowledge that there had been no thorough examination of the channel before the formal opening. Several of the steamers did run aground on shoals momentarily, but no serious difficulties were incurred owing to the fact that the draught of all vessels was limited to thirteen feet for the initial transit. On the morning of November 20 the official party reached Suez, and the momentous occasion was successfully terminated.¹⁰² The old overland route was passing and a new all-water route was taking its place.

The English Government conducted itself handsomely upon the occasion of the opening of the canal. Not only was it represented in the person of the Ambassador to Turkey, but high officials of the Government telegraphed congratulations to De Lesseps upon the consummation of a work so beneficial to commerce.¹⁰³ Lord Palmerston and others of the early opponents of the canal had already passed from the scene, and the great questions of the hour, as far as British attitude toward the canal was concerned, touched no longer on the danger of the separation of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire or the planting of a large French colony along the route to India, but rather on the possibility or desirability of neutralizing the canal through international engagements and the better adjustment of canal tolls.

¹⁰¹ It is a matter of some interest that one of the British vessels to make the passage of the canal in the wake of the government vessels was the steamship *Hæwk* bound for Suez with the shore end of the British Indian Telegraph Company's cable.

¹⁰² For details of this notable event see the *Illustrated London News*, November, 1869; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 390-401; *Blackwood's Magazine*, CVII, 85-375; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 22-42; W. G. Hamley, *A New Sea and an Old Land; Being Papers Suggested by a Visit to Egypt at the end of 1869*. Hamley was one of the guests at the opening of the canal.

¹⁰³ Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, I, 401-407; *London Times*, 18 Dec., 1867.

Once the canal was in operation and the Franco-German War had removed the Emperor Napoleon, much greater concern for the safety of the canal was expressed in London than in Paris.

It was very soon evident that with the opening of the Suez Canal the English overland route had merely shifted. Instead of following the railway from Alexandria through Cairo to Suez, it now entered at Port Saïd and continued by water. The first vessel to pass through the canal and pay tolls in regular course flew the British flag. And it was presently found that, over the course of the first few years, practically 75% of the vessels passing through the canal were British.¹⁰⁴ From the beginning the canal was none the less a British highway because it had been constructed and was being operated by a corporation which was essentially French. The transfer of a large share of pecuniary interest in the Company to the British Government was scarcely needed to give point to the fact that the Suez Canal from the outset was intrinsically British; commercially, by virtue of the volume of British trade, and politically, because of British hegemony in the East.

¹⁰⁴ Jean Darcy, *Cent Années de Rivalité Coloniale*, pp. 345-346; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, II, 1, 2, *passim*; *London Times*, 28 Jan., 1870; C. H. A. Dall, *From Calcutta to London by the Suez Canal* (Calcutta, 1869).

CHAPTER XV

TELEGRAPHIC ROUTES TO THE EAST

THE SUCCESS of steam communication with India and its extension to China and Australia led to striking commercial results without the accompaniment of the various kinds of political difficulties which had been anticipated in some quarters. As monthly service had become fortnightly, and as the time in transit of the overland mails shrank from two months to less than one, the benefits increased in proportion. There was, therefore, much less reason to doubt the efficacy of the electric telegraph, once its principles had been discovered, than that of the early steam vessel. Some fifteen years had been necessary for the establishment of regular steam communication between Great Britain and India from the time of the first definite proposals. In even less time from the beginning of telegraphy on a commercial scale lines were in operation between England and India, and a network of land lines and submarine cables connected East and West before steam lines had become adequate and sufficiently rapid.

Soon after the epoch-making telegraphic experiments of the American, Samuel Finley Breese Morse, became generally known they were applied to long distance as well as local communication. As early as 1839 an insulated wire, serving as a kind of primitive submarine cable, had been laid under the Hoogly River to connect the two banks at Calcutta. In 1851 a much more ambitious enterprise was carried out when a submarine cable was successfully laid under the English Channel connecting England and France.¹ With the formal opening of this line on November 1, 1852, men began to dream of imperial telegraph and cable lines which would annihilate distance as far as the transmission of messages was concerned.²

¹ *London Times*, 2 Nov., 1852.

² *Calcutta Review*, LV, 45-46. This journal says, "To Mr. Adley undoubtedly belongs the credit of having originated the idea of telegraphic communication between England and India which is now being carried out. Even the route suggested by him as the best has been adopted."

Shortly after the close of the Crimean War some short lengths of submarine cable were laid in the Mediterranean, connecting Corsica, Sardinia, Malta, and Corfu, considerably shortening the time for communication between Alexandria and London by way of Marseilles.³ One of the concerns which aided in the building of these shorter lines was the Mediterranean Extension Telegraph Company. This group, having obtained the sanction of the British Government for laying cables between Cagliari and Malta and Malta and Corfu, completed its lines in 1857, and the Government guaranteed a minimum rate of interest for a term of 25 years on a capital of £120,000, conditional on the maintenance of the line. The cable broke frequently, however, and in 1859 had to be abandoned altogether. After some negotiations a new cable was laid between Sicily and Malta, to which the former guarantees were made to apply.⁴

Meanwhile, telegraph lines had been multiplying in India. Experimental lines had been commenced in 1852, and by the beginning of 1856 about 4500 miles of electric telegraph were in operation between the principal Indian centres.⁵ The concern and alarm created by the war in Persia and the dangerous outbreak in India in 1857 brought to the authorities both in England and in India poignant realization of the need for a quicker through communication than could be supplied by lines of steamships, however fast and regular these might be.⁶ Companies were immediately formed and others projected for the purpose of establishing direct telegraphic communication between England and India; and "had the British Government been favourably disposed towards a guarantee or subsidy, engineers were not wanting who would have undertaken to connect London with Calcutta by an unbroken wire."⁷

One of these companies, the European and Indian Junction Telegraph Co., Ltd., has already been alluded to in connection with the proposed Euphrates Valley Railway. This concern, projected in 1856, sought to connect the existing lines in England and on the Continent with the head of the Persian Gulf, whence a cable was projected by the Government of India to extend to Kurrachee.⁸ At the outset this scheme appeared to promise suc-

³ *The History of the Indian Revolt and of the Expeditions to Persia, China, and Japan, 1856-1857-1858* . . . (London, 1859), p. 225; *Parliamentary Paper*, 1858, No. 382, p. ix.

⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 116.

⁵ *The History of the Indian Revolt*, pp. 9, 92-93.

⁶ Brig.-Gen. Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, II, 367.

⁷ *The History of the Indian Revolt*, p. 225.

⁸ William Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, p. 229; *London Times*, 16 June, 1856; *Calcutta Review*, LV, p. 46.

cess. Capital stock to the amount of £200,000 was provisionally subscribed for, and considerable encouragement was offered by the Court of Directors.⁹ The East India Company was not in a position to offer either a subsidy or a guarantee of a minimum rate of interest on the capital to be invested, however, and the delay occasioned by the necessity of securing some measure of Government support before proceeding with such a huge and doubtful venture gave time for other plans to come upon the scene as competitors.¹⁰

The question of the best telegraphic route at once became a prominent issue. Inasmuch as telegraphic lines were to a large degree independent of water, wind, and land levels, although no less subject to political conditions and influences, there were more possible routes to be considered in this case. The European and Indian Junction Telegraph Co. planned to construct a line from Seleucia, on the Mediterranean, to Basrah or some similar station on the Persian Gulf, following the course of one or the other of the great Mesopotamian rivers for a major portion of the distance and perhaps avoiding nomadic Arab tribes by using a sub-fluvial line in the Tigris below Bagdad.¹¹ This plan had the advantage of utilizing a direct route, with one terminus reasonably near to Constantinople, whence land lines were about to be completed to Channel ports, and which might in future be connected by submarine cable with Malta, and with the other terminus within reach of Indian lines already in operation.

Meanwhile another group of promoters put on foot a proposition to construct a submarine line to India using the Suez and Red Sea route. This line, it was pointed out, was practically free from such political difficulties as would naturally beset the rival line, it could at all times be controlled by British forces, and would form a logical supplement to the mail route.

In May, 1857, a special Committee of the House of Commons investigated both this and the Euphrates Valley project, and during the summer both were debated in Parliament at considerable length.¹² Even the refusal of the British Government to guarantee a return on the capital subscribed for a Euphrates Valley Railway did not prevent Government consideration of measures for guaranteeing telegraph lines. Indeed, at the very moment of killing the railway project in the House of Commons,

⁹ *London Times*, 6 Jan., 1857.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4 May, 1858.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31 May, 1858.

¹² *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CXLVII, 1662-1676, *passim*; W. P. Andrew, *Letter to Viscount Palmerston, K.G., on the Political Importance of the Euphrates Valley Railway* . . . pp. 55-68.

Lord Palmerston remarked that telegraphic communication seemed to him to stand in a different light from a railway, that telegraphic communication was somewhat similar to postal communication. He was inclined to favor the Euphrates Valley line in preference to that by way of the Red Sea, and he believed that Government should support it.¹³

The first British projects for linking up England and India by means of land lines of electric telegraph were destined never to bear fruit. The Turkish Government, which in 1856 under the influence of Reschid Pasha had promised sweeping concessions both for a railway and a telegraph line under English auspices, reversed its decision later after the downfall of that famous Minister. Indeed, in 1858 the Turks decided to construct their own telegraph line from Constantinople through Sivas, Diarbekr, Mosul, and Bagdad, to Basrah, in the hope that either the British or the Indian Government would provide for the completion of the line from the head of the Persian Gulf to Kurrachee and so to India. An English agent, John Staniforth, was employed by the Ottoman Government to purchase the necessary materials and supplies in England, and one of his fellow-countrymen, Lieut.-Col. Biddulph was placed in charge of construction operations.¹⁴

Meanwhile, two other Englishmen, Messrs. Lionel and Francis Gisborne, had succeeded in obtaining from the Turkish and Egyptian Governments in 1856 concessions for the carrying of a telegraph line across Egypt in connection with the laying of a submarine cable from Constantinople to Egypt and from Egypt *via* the Red Sea to Kurrachee.¹⁵ Armed with such an asset, they returned to England and in 1858 completed the organization of the Red Sea and India Telegraph Co., which proposed to extend telegraphic communication not to India merely, but eventually to the East Indies as well, this program being contingent on receiving the necessary governmental assistance at the outset. The line immediately projected between Suez and Kurrachee, 3043 miles in length, was to be constructed in sections, with relay stations at intervals along the Egyptian and Arabian coasts.¹⁶

Memory of the recent crises in the East, coupled with the fact that a very large capital was required to construct, lay and maintain either land or submarine electric lines, led the British Gov-

¹³ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVII, 1677; F. O. 78/1340, Sir H. Seymour to Lord Clarendon, 19 Aug., 1857.

¹⁴ *Morning Chronicle*, 22 June, 1858.

¹⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 90, 184.

¹⁶ Charles Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs: Their History, Construction and Working* (London, 1898), p. 57.

ernment to give a guarantee of a minimum rate of interest on a capital stock of £800,000, although this guarantee was presently translated into a definite and unconditional subsidy of £36,000 per year. With this support, the Company hastened to submerge their first lines, commencing late in the year 1858, on the Constantinople-Alexandria division.

The preparations made for the working of this line were exceedingly primitive at this early stage of development of submarine telegraphy. Only a very cursory survey was made of the submarine route over which the cable was to be laid, and no allowance was made for varying depths of water or kinds of sea bottom. The cable itself was such as might have sufficed for a time for short distances, but it was wholly inadequate both in weight and insulation for a long distance, being merely a single wire insulated with gutta-percha and covered with a hempen sheath. In consequence, after some 220 miles of cable had been paid out from the Constantinople end, tests showed that the insulation was too faulty to admit of sending messages. The cable was cut, therefore, and became a total loss without ever having been used.¹⁷

The next year the laying of another and heavier cable was begun in the Red Sea. The first section, from Suez to Aden, 1358 nautical miles, was landed at two points, Cosseir and Suakin. This line failed to work almost immediately after its completion. While the cable was being lifted, repaired and tested in 1860, the second portion of the line, from Aden to Kurrachee, 1685 nautical miles, was being laid. Intermediate stops were made on this division at Hallana Island and at Mascat. This line also very quickly developed serious faults, and even the section between Kurrachee and Bombay could not be relied upon. After some months spent in vain efforts to resuscitate the line in its various sections, the Company despaired of success. The whole line had to be abandoned before any commercial use had been made of it.¹⁸

The causes of failure were several. In the first place, the surveys made of the floors of the Red and Arabian Seas were very inadequate, the cable was laid by compass without any attempt to select a bed of uniform depth, and the cable itself was not equally well adapted to various water temperatures and ocean topography. In the second place, the cable-laying machinery was crude, re-

¹⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 90. One of the principal engineers of this line, Henry Charles Forde, gave some exceedingly valuable evidence to a Parliamentary Committee on East India communications in 1866.

¹⁸ Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58; E. B. Bright and Sir Charles Bright, *The Life Story of Sir Charles Tilston Bright* (2 vols., London, 1899), II, 31-32. A new concern, the Telegraph to India Company, was formed in 1862 for restoring and working the lines of the Red Sea and India Company.

sulting in uneven tension as the cable was lowered into the sea. But at all points the line was pulled taut, and the necessity for slack, to allow the cable to adapt itself to the irregularities of the ocean floor, was not appreciated. The result was, not only in this but in several other instances of early cable laying, that where the cable failed to touch bottom by being suspended from one elevation to another, it collected various kinds of sea growths and presently broke under the weight. Moreover, it was found that the protective wire wrappings of the line quickly disintegrated in the warm salt water of the Red Sea. Marine borers, such as the formidable *teredo navalis*, which had an inexhaustible appetite for gutta-percha cable insulation, and even sharks, were sources of considerable trouble. In some places, too, where water was shallow, tidal action and sharp rocks took their toll of damage.¹⁹

Although this experience was dearly bought (failures in submarine telegraphs in 1859 and 1860 amounted to more than £1,000,000), it was only by such practical experience that the construction and laying of successful and efficient subaqueous cables was afterward made possible. Scientists and commercial organizations alike began a more thorough study of marine telegraphic engineering. A great deal of evidence bearing on the causes of failure of the first lines was collected in 1859 by a Joint Committee of eight members, half nominated by the Board of Trade and half by the Atlantic Telegraph Company. Between December 1, 1859, and September 4, 1860, this Committee held twenty-two sittings, consulting engineers, electricians, professors, physicists, seamen, and manufacturers, and carefully investigating every phase of the subject. The report of the Committee, submitted in April, 1861, was published by the Government and became a classic in submarine telegraphic engineering.²⁰

Just as the first attempts by private corporations to establish long distance steamship lines had been supplanted by government agencies, so it remained for government to take up the burden in telegraphic extension where it was relinquished by commercial enterprise. The first section of government line between England and India was a cable laid more or less as a result of accident between Malta and Alexandria. Soon after the Indian Mutiny, the British Government decided to lay a cable between Falmouth and Gibraltar in order to establish the first link in what was pro-

¹⁹ *The Projected Sub-Marine Cable to India and Australia — considered as being the most direct, expeditious, and secure line of communication. . . By H. A. L., "The Old Shekarry" (H. A. Leveson), (London, 1869), pp. 20-21; Bright and Bright, op. cit., II, 29-31.*

²⁰ Bright, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

jected as a complete British-controlled line to the East.²¹ In 1857, however, telegraphic communication had been completed from Bombay and Calcutta to Rangoon, and the President of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood, gave assurances that the line would soon be continued to Singapore and on to the Australian colonies. The approach of difficulties with China caused the original destination of the Falmouth-Gibraltar cable to be altered to the Rangoon-Singapore line, and in December, 1860, the cable was placed on shipboard to be carried out round the Cape. On the voyage out, one of the cable-laying vessels was damaged so badly that a return to England was necessary. By the time all was again in readiness, the favorable season for laying the cable had passed. Meanwhile, the conclusion of the war with China removed the principal incentive for the establishment of the Rangoon line. Difficulties with the Government of India over the responsibility of maintaining the line contributed further to a change in plan. It was finally decided, therefore, to lay the cable between Malta and Alexandria, since Malta was already in touch with European lines.²²

Early in 1861, a new series of soundings was made for the Malta-Alexandria line to correct the existing charts, which were known to be inaccurate. Since the Red Sea cable had been laid in deep water and had been found for that reason very difficult to raise for repairs, the engineers for this line, Messrs. Lionel Gisborne and Henry Charles Forde, adopted a shallow water bed along the south shore of the Mediterranean. Within the year 1861 the whole of this line was laid in sections: from Malta to Tripoli, Tripoli to Benghazi, and Benghazi to Alexandria. Expenses of laying the line were shared by the British and Indian Governments, the former assuming three-fifths of the cost.²³ In 1861 and 1862 a number of breaks occurred in the section nearest Alexandria, due apparently to irregularities in the ocean floor, but the line worked sufficiently well to give promise of becoming a very essential link in eastern communications.²⁴

The political value of telegraph lines and the extent of capital required for their development led to the development of land telegraphs in Europe on a national basis. To some extent this was also true in Asia. During the years from 1857 to 1861, Turkish

²¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 90, 115, 184.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185. The Convention between the British and Ottoman Governments for the establishment of the cable between Malta and Alexandria, dated Constantinople, 21 April, 1861, is given in the Appendix, pp. 349-350.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 349-350, 582-591.

²⁴ Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 2-3; Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-64. This cable was replaced in 1868 by a direct line from Malta to Alexandria.

capital was employed in the construction of a line of wire from Constantinople, or rather Pera, where all the European lines converged, to Bagdad. The line crossed the Bosphorus by means of a submarine cable some six miles north of the city, then passed to Scutari and Ismid, and thence by a fairly direct line through Angora, Sivas, Diarbekr, and Mosul to Bagdad.²⁶ This line, though faulty, opened up another link of about 1000 miles between Europe and India. The Turkish Government had originally intended to continue the line on to the head of the Persian Gulf. Below Bagdad so many new difficulties appeared, however, that the completion of the work was postponed for a time, and in 1864 the line was carried on to the Gulf by English agencies.²⁶

In the meantime, Indian lines were reaching out to join with those from the West. It was originally proposed to construct a land line from Kurrachee along the coast of Baluchistan, Persia, and the Gulf until it effected a junction with a wire to be brought down from Bagdad. In 1864, Lieut.-Col. Patrick Stewart, of Indian Mutiny fame, was despatched from India to Persia on special mission to investigate the practicability of the matter. Col. Stewart reported against the construction of a land line. Political relationships in southeastern Persia were so confused, and the native tribes were so lawless, he found, that a land line would only invite difficulties. In view of this report and the complete failure of the first Suez-Aden-Kurrachee cable, the British Government conjointly with the Council for India determined upon laying a new cable between the mouth of the Shaat-el-Arab and Gwador (Gwadel or Churbar) on the Baluch coast, the most westerly point to which it was considered wise to extend the system of Indian land lines. Both of these enterprises were carried out. Eventually this land line, as a part of the imperial communication, was given up in favor of a cable from Kurrachee to Gwador,²⁷ but its completion provided a very useful line at the outset.

Work on the Persian Gulf cable continued during the years 1862, 1863, and 1864. The Gulf was resurveyed for the purpose and a favorable cable bed charted. The cable itself contained all of the improvements suggested by several years of experience both

²⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 619, 620.

²⁶ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 368. It had been supposed that the roving tribes of the lower Tigris and the malarious climate would be very difficult obstacles to overcome. These proved to be less formidable than had been anticipated.

²⁷ Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 33-34; Frederick H. Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia: an Account of the Journeys of the Persian Boundary Commission, 1870-71-72* . . . (2 vols., London, 1876), I, xlii.

in eastern and western seas. In contrast with some of the earlier lines, which had weighed less than one ton per nautical mile, this had a weight of over four tons per mile. Two of the most able telegraph authorities of the day, Messrs. Charles Bright and Latimer Clark, were appointed engineers of the 1450-mile line, and the former undertook the personal supervision of its laying. Considerable difficulty was experienced in landing the cable near Fao at the mouth of the Shaat-el-Arab, as the water was exceedingly shallow and the mud bottom very soft. The cable-laying flotilla, consisting of some twelve vessels of the Indian Navy and led by the steamers *Semiramis* and *Zenobia*, could not approach within six or eight miles of the shore. The cable had to be cut into relatively short lengths of about one and a half miles and placed in position from various small craft. The line gave perfect tests upon its completion, and was "the first instance of any great length of cable being a complete and lasting success."²⁸

Meanwhile, arrangements had been worked out at Constantinople and incorporated in conventions at the instance of British authorities which were to provide the basis for the working of the various lines through both Turkish and Persian territory. In October, 1863, was signed a protocol generally known as the Overland Telegraph Convention,²⁹ "on the subject of the extension of the line above ground from Bagdad to Bussorah and to Khanakain, with the object of connecting, by two different lines, the Indian telegraph with the telegraphic network of Europe. . ."³⁰

According to the agreement, the Ottoman Government was to undertake the construction of a line between Bagdad and Basrah, whence it would connect with the Persian Gulf cable. Upon the completion of this line another was to be constructed in the same manner from Bagdad to Khanikin, whence a Persian line was already reaching out toward Teheran, Ispahan, and Bushire. At Bushire connection would be made again with the Persian Gulf cable.³¹ An additional Turco-Persian Treaty was drawn up at Constantinople in November, 1863, to give further effect to the arrangements between Britain and the Ottoman Government. This treaty provided for the uninterrupted transmission of messages, the code to be employed, rates to be levied, *et cetera*, and was particularly important in that it defined a part of the Turco-

²⁸ Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 77. See Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 38-41, 53-61; *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 179.

²⁹ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 368.

³⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 394.

³¹ C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds . . .* VII, 4, *passim*.

Persian boundary in a territory which had previously been vaguely claimed by both states.³²

The year 1864 saw arrangements almost completed for the communication between Great Britain and India. An Indo-Ottoman Telegraphic Convention was signed at Constantinople on September 3, amplifying the Protocol of the previous year and making more definitive arrangements for the telegraphic service in prospect. Provision was made for the establishment of a British telegraph office at Fao, and for the employment in all Ottoman stations of telegraphic staffs "possessing a knowledge of the English language sufficient for the perfect performance of that service." All of the officers of the Ottoman telegraphic administration at the Constantinople office were to "be selected from those of the Ottoman telegraph officials who are thoroughly conversant with the English language" — a provision which was to cause a good deal of mutual unpleasantness during the next few years. One line of wire from Constantinople to Fao was always to be devoted exclusively to Indo-European messages.³³

The laying of the cable between Gwadar and Fao was completed in March and April, 1864. The first section of the line, between Kurrachee and Gwadar, was laid last because a land line already connected these two places.³⁴ Work on the land line between Bagdad and Fao had proceeded rather more slowly. It was only in March, 1865, that this final gap was closed and the entire system made ready for operation, although the first messages had been sent in the previous month.³⁵

The construction of the Persian auxiliary line had also been put under way. The first formal step toward the building of this line was the signing of an Anglo-Persian engagement on December 17, 1862. "The Persian Government considers it necessary," this ran, "to construct a line of telegraph without delay from Khanakeen to the capital, Teheran, and from Teheran to the port of Bushire; and they agree that, whenever the English Govern-

³² A translation of the Treaty is given in *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, App., pp. 403-404; *British and Foreign State Papers*, LVII, 1342-1343.

³³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 350-352; *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LIV, 20-25; Lewis Hertslet, *A Complete Collection of . . . Treaties . . .* XII, 842-846.

³⁴ Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 61-91. Several of the vessels of the Indian Navy participating in this enterprise were those which had steamed and sailed into the Persian Gulf seven years before to storm the Persian forts and land troops at Bushire.

³⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 187, 436. There was a bit of irony in the fact that Col. Stewart, who had superintended the construction of the Indo-European line to the east of Constantinople, died in that city only a few days before the first messages were sent.

ment may require to communicate by the said telegraph, they are to be at liberty to do so through the Persian telegraph officers in the way they may desire."³⁶ Progress was slow on this line, partly because of intrigues at Teheran, but principally because of the serious depredations of roving tribes and the obstructions raised by local officials. Nevertheless, by the end of 1864 the first single-wire line was constructed, and it came into regular use just a month after the Turkish line had been completed from Bagdad to the Gulf.³⁷

With the opening of the Indo-European line in the early months of 1865, the pioneering period in the movement to establish a telegraphic communication with India came to an end.³⁸ Communications which until the end of the first third of the century had required months, and had been reduced by the steamship to a few weeks, now were sent in a matter of days. The communication with India was still far from perfect; there were many interruptions in service and many malicious and careless mistakes were made during the frequent repetition of messages at relay stations. Perhaps the greatest difficulty lay in the fact that the communication was in the hands of a number of foreign and not always friendly powers. Even at the time when the Indo-European line was just opened, it was a foregone conclusion that it was only a question of time until new submarine cables would largely or entirely replace the unsatisfactory and cumbersome land lines by channels which, because they lay below the surface of the sea, would be entirely British controlled.³⁹

During the next few years much effort was devoted to the supplementing of the existing facilities for the exchange of messages between England and India and to the removal of as many obstructions as possible in the wires in use. From the very first the new lines proved to be of very great commercial advantage, in spite of the fact that the transmission of telegrams was frequently slow and they often reached their destination in an inaccurate or garbled form.⁴⁰ The number of separate political units to be

³⁶ Hertslet, *op. cit.*, XII, 692; *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 398.

³⁷ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 368; *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 436; Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 92-93. The problem of maintaining a land line along the lower Tigris, where nomadic tribesmen often found telegraph wire of great assistance in making bridges or mending harness, and who had a great proclivity for using the insulators on telegraph poles as targets, was largely solved by choosing line guards from these very tribes. These were paid 15s. or 16s. per week as long as their particular sections of the wire remained in working order. They, in turn, bribed their fellows to respect the line.

³⁸ Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

³⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 87.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 420-426, 491, *et passim*.

traversed was one of the greatest problems. A telegram directed from England to India was first delivered to one of two companies acting as agents for the transmission of messages, the Electric and International Telegraph Co. or the Submarine Telegraph Co. These concerns, operating cables to the Continent, were then responsible for the further despatch of the telegrams committed to them by any of the several routes available between London and Constantinople. The route generally employed by the Electric and International Telegraph Co. lay from London to Frankfurt, thence to Vienna, and on to Constantinople *via* Belgrade. Occasionally messages were sent to Constantinople through Berlin and Vienna instead. The Submarine Telegraph Company at times employed four different routes in Europe, depending on the state of repair and the crowded condition of the various lines. One of these lay by way of Paris, Munich, and Vienna to Constantinople. Another lay through Paris and Turin, and *via* Otranto and Valona to Constantinople. A third alternative lay *via* Brussels, Berlin, and Belgrade to the Golden Horn. A fourth, not often employed, ran through Russian territory. Entering Europe at The Hague, it continued *via* Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Tiflis to Teheran, or from Berlin *via* Mysolowitz and Tiflis to the Persian line.⁴¹ In all cases the continental lines were government-controlled, hence there was considerable "red tape" in their operation, resulting in frequent tardiness in the transmission of private or foreign official messages. Government messages in each European state always had the right of way over any messages originating beyond the frontier. Espionage was frequent and rates varied. On account of the political character of these lines, the situation in Germany prior to the completion of national unification would have been intolerable but for a centralized telegraphic administration, somewhat akin to the *Zollverein*, termed the Austro-Germanic Union, which included the states of the Dutch Netherlands and Belgium, the Germanic Confederation and Austria. It controlled all of the lines entering the Continent by way of Brussels and extended its control as far as Belgrade, where the Turkish Administration began. Thus the German route possessed a number of advantages over that through France and Italy to Turkey.⁴²

The routes available from Constantinople have already been

⁴¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. ix-x, 26, 28, 30-31, 38, 443, *et passim*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26, 37-39, 84, 87, *et passim*. The rate on messages from England to India in 1866 was *5l. 1s.* for every 20 words. This cost was apportioned to each of the telegraphic administrations through which the messages had to pass. France, Italy, and Spain entered into a telegraphic union somewhat similar to the Austro-German Union.

described. The Turkish line passed from Scutari *via* Ismid, Angora, Sivas, Diarbekr, and Mosul to Bagdad. From here the message might be sent direct to Fao and *via* the Persian Gulf cable to Gwador and Kurrachee, connecting at the latter point with Indian lines, or it might be routed from Bagdad to Fao through the Persian line *via* Teheran and Ispahan. In either case the Persian Gulf cable was the only artery connecting East and West. Presumably a message followed the route specified at the time it was first received, but in many instances the English operating companies used their discretion in selecting one route or another, and not infrequently the telegraph authorities along the way disregarded routing instructions and followed their own impulses in sending messages in either direction.

It was with the intention of avoiding many of the difficulties inherent in the European and Asiatic government land lines that the Red Sea and India Telegraph Company had attempted to establish a submarine cable connection between Suez and Kurrachee in 1858. The early breaking down of this cable and the failure of the Telegraph to India Company to revive it ruined all prospect of a direct and relatively independent line from the Mediterranean to India for a number of years, and left the cables which had been laid in the Mediterranean to connect with the Red Sea line to serve local purposes only in connection with the despatch and arrival of Mediterranean steam packets.⁴⁸ In 1866, however, there was a prospect that an alternative line to India by way of the Mediterranean and Egypt would be available. Early in this year the Turkish Government opened a line from Alexandria across the Isthmus of Suez and through Palestine and Syria *via* Aleppo to Diarbekr. Inasmuch as this communicated with the Alexandria-Malta cable, and thus provided a complete artery between Europe and India through Asiatic Turkey and the Persian Gulf, the Egyptian Government solicited British patronage. The Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company therefore gave notice in London of the availability of this line, and during interruptions in the direct Turkish route it was largely used. The utility of this line for Indian messages was suddenly destroyed, however, when the Turkish authorities discovered that messages sent by this route, although costing the British sender more, paid less Turkish revenue, and the acceptance of messages between

⁴⁸ During the American Civil War, to be sure, the cables running to Egypt were burdened with commercial messages relating to Egyptian cotton and the cable companies reaped a harvest of fees. After 1865, however, these lines were very little used except during the few weeks mentioned in the text. — See *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 85, 97-98, 117.

England and India was ordered discontinued. The line between Malta and Alexandria thereupon relapsed into desuetude, only partially relieved by the sending of local messages or by the transmission to England of messages brought to Egypt by steam packet.⁴⁴

By the time telegraphic communication with Europe had been completed, India was well supplied with land lines. As a system, these impinged on Kurrachee, which had thus become the most important telegraphic station in the East.⁴⁵ At the beginning of the year 1865, India had some 14,500 miles of government and 3000 miles of railway-owned telegraph lines serving practically all of the great metropolises of the country.⁴⁶ But unfortunately, the mileage of lines and the fact that most of this was government property was no index to the quality of service maintained. The efficiency of these lines, indeed, was notoriously poor. This was due in part to the fact that many of the most important telegraphic branches in India had been hastily constructed for emergency use, during and immediately following the Indian Mutiny, in which instances neither the materials employed nor the workmanship were such as would maintain an efficient and permanent establishment. In the second place, "the dominant idea in starting the telegraph in India was to get it constructed cheaply, [and it was believed] . . . that the way to start it cheaply was to put up a thick iron wire on the top of a plain wooden post, without any insulations . . . and having got the cheapest possible line, to get the cheapest possible establishment to work it."⁴⁷ Salaries paid both to officers and to signallers were made as low as possible. Mere boys, almost wholly illiterate, were given charge of sending and receiving messages. Native linemen were employed at low wages without any adequate oversight or direction, and their work was largely neglected. All of these factors combined to breed delay and inaccuracy in the sending of telegrams in India. But coupled with these evils was that of malicious misconstruction of messages whenever native merchants might profit from such errors, and it was an open scandal that commercial intelligence was peddled in Indian markets by Government telegraph clerks. Indeed, of all the difficulties and chances of error to be contended with in sending a message from London to Bombay, Calcutta, or

⁴⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 83-84, 100, 118, 195-196.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1870, No. 166, p. 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1866, No. 423, pp. 137, xiii.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 162, 345-346. It was proposed at various times after 1862 that a private company be formed to take over the Indian telegraph lines, but the Government was unwilling to surrender so much power.

Madras, those encountered between the presidencies and Kurra-
chee were decidedly the worst.⁴⁸

During the first year of Indo-European telegraphic communi-
cations many difficulties and aggravations arose in addition to
those which were peculiar to Indian lines. Often breaks in wires
along the main trunk lines resulted in long interruptions and de-
lays, with no hope of redress on the part of senders of messages.
The many different telegraph systems and administrations com-
prising even the least complicated of the complete routes made for
confusion and irresponsibility. Places of error or causes of delay
were difficult to locate. Nevertheless, it early became apparent
that the bulk of these evils lay in the Turkish lines. For the most
part, European systems worked well and dependably. Persian
lines were operated, under Anglo-Persian conventions, by British
officials in charge of the Superintendent of the Indo-European
Telegraph,⁴⁹ and except when the wires temporarily failed, good
service was rendered. In the case of the Turkish lines, however,
no intelligent or adequate supervision was provided for, either
for transmission of messages or upkeep of lines. At the same
time, Turkish authorities refused to place British officers in any
positions of trust and power, partly, perhaps, because of pressure
from other European states.⁵⁰ As a result, messages frequently
accumulated in considerable numbers at some of the Turkish relay
stations, and were filed in the order in which they arrived. When
a spurt of energy or the repair of a wire again started their trans-
mission, the sending clerks usually began at the top of the ac-
cumulation of telegrams. Some of these reached their destina-
tion in good time, a matter of from five to eight days, while others
required a month or even more, arriving after the confirming
message sent by mail had been delivered.⁵¹

In spite of a great deal of irregularity and inaccuracy in the
sending of messages between England and India, merchants in
both countries uniformly pronounced the telegraph a great con-
venience, if not a commercial necessity. Their constant protests
at faulty service and the steady increase in the number and value
of commercial transactions in the East were becoming insistent by
the first of the year 1866.⁵² Other needs were also crying for at-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 55-56, 86, 98 ff., 105-110, 112-113, 408-413, 420.

⁴⁹ In 1865-1866, it was Lieut.-Col. Frederick J. Goldsmid, who was presently
succeeded by Major J. W. Champain. — *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LV, 26-29.

⁵⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 104-106.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 50, 99, 198. Indeed, in 1866, one message was transmitted
between Calcutta and London in less than two hours.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41, 45, 49, 50, 52, 55, 531-537.

tion. The Australian colonies, which after long agitation and many disappointments had secured regular steam packet service a few years earlier, now came forward with demands for telegraphic communication with the home country.⁵³ Lines had already been constructed between the various provincial capitals at the expense of colonial governments. The Dutch had completed a telegraphic link from end to end of Java. Indian telegraphs had been extended eastward to Rangoon and lines projected to Singapore and China. Colonial representations on this head contributed materially to the focusing of Parliamentary attention on the several phases of eastern communications, and on February 27, 1866, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed, largely at the instance of Sir Charles Bright, "to inquire into the practical working of the present systems of Telegraphic and Postal Communications between this Country and the East Indies."⁵⁴

This Select Committee, representing men experienced in every aspect of communication facilities, held a number of sessions between March 13 and July 20, when their report was completed. A thorough survey was made of existing and proposed lines of steamships, land telegraphs, and cables. The report of the Committee was influenced to no small degree by the striking fact that from the moment the Committee was appointed the telegraphic service on all Turkish lines particularly, and on European, Persian, and Indian land lines in general, underwent a vast improvement. Messages were transmitted with a great degree of accuracy and in only a fraction of the time previously consumed, giving conclusive evidence that the majority of evils which had been suffered for some time were not inherent in the electric lines themselves.⁵⁵

Considerable attention was first given in the report to a speeding up of steam communication and postal service to all parts of the East. Proceeding then to telegraphic facilities, it was recommended that, "having regard to the magnitude of the interests, political, commercial, and social, involved in the connection between this country and India," it was not expedient that the means of intercommunication by telegraph should be dependent upon any line or lines in the hands of foreign governments, however well such services might be administered in times of peace. Because of that, new and independent land lines ought to be es-

⁵³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 71-72, 123-124, 183-191, 193-194.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. ii; Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 140-143; *London Times*, 20 Feb., 1866.

⁵⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 27, 38, 41-42, 50-51, 54, 58, 540-555.

tablished through Turkey, and the conduct of Persian lines should be improved. Further, the communication by way of the Persian Gulf should be doubled, either by the laying of a second cable, or by continuing the land line from Kurrachee and Gwadur to Bunder Abbas and thence to Ispahan. In conclusion, it was recommended that Government support be given the project of establishing a direct line under one management between London and the Indian Presidencies and between India and Australia by way of China.⁵⁶

Many of the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1866 were carried out. The Persian Gulf cable to Kurrachee was supplemented a year later by the extension of a line of land telegraph from Gwadur to Jask.⁵⁷ These lines received reinforcement in 1868 with the formation of the Indo-European Telegraph Company, "for promoting a more speedy and reliable line of communication between England and India."⁵⁸ The line constructed by this concern was completed in 1870, and brought together under a single management a line extending through Germany and lower Russia to Teheran, where it met the lines of the Indo-European Telegraph Department of the Indian Government. As long as this route held a practical monopoly of all messages transmitted between East and West it was naturally a profitable medium of intercourse. From the time the line from India to Europe was first opened until 1870, the Indian Government realized approximately £100,000 per year on the Persian Gulf cable.

Such halcyon times, however, could not endure. A great rival water route, possessing advantages as peculiar in the realm of telegraphic as in that of steam communication, was opened in 1870, and within a few years had gone far toward displacing the land route. The first attempts to connect Europe and India by means of submarine cables were made at a very early stage of telegraphic development, and were, in consequence, failures. But in May, 1868, a new era dawned with the formation of the Anglo-Mediterranean Telegraph Company for the construction and operation of land lines in Italy connecting with those leading to England and of a new direct cable from Malta to Alexandria. Up to 1868 the telegraphic communication between England and Egypt was carried on by means of the submarine cable between

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi; Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 146-148. It was also recommended that the Indian telegraphs be leased or otherwise made over to private concerns for operating.

⁵⁷ Goldsmid, *op. cit.*, I, xlix; Hertslet, *op. cit.*, XII, 855-858.

⁵⁸ Bright and Bright, *op. cit.*, II, 78.

Dover and Calais, the French and Italian land lines to Sicily, the Mediterranean Extension Company's cable to Malta, and thence by the Government cable *via* Benghazi to Alexandria. This mode of communication proved to be so unsatisfactory that the Anglo-Mediterranean Telegraph Company undertook to rectify it. The Company first purchased a forty-year concession from the Government of Italy for the working of their land wires by English clerks. Then it proceeded to lay a Malta-Alexandria cable, securing permission for this construction by leasing the British Government cable for fifteen years at £2000 per year.⁵⁹ This provided for efficient service between England and Egypt by way of the Continent.

The next step in developing a new artery to the East was taken with the formation of the Falmouth, Gibraltar, and Malta Telegraph Company in 1869 for a line of cable as indicated in the firm's name. This enterprise, although competing to a degree with the line of the Mediterranean Extension Company between Sicily and Malta, on the capital of which the British Government had guaranteed 6% per annum, nevertheless had a great political and strategic value in making England independent of continental countries for her Mediterranean communications.⁶⁰ This line was opened in June, 1870, greatly reducing the time and increasing the efficiency in the service between England and Egypt.⁶¹

Meanwhile a third great line of cable was being completed between Suez and Bombay, bringing to fruition the plan in which the Red Sea and India Company had failed ten years earlier. Such a proposition had been made to the India Office in December, 1866, by the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, which was working the Malta and Alexandria cable on lease, but as this proposal was based on the idea that a government guarantee of interest would be absolutely necessary, it was allowed to lapse.⁶² The next year a new project was launched under the name of the Anglo-Indian Telegraph Company for the building of a similar line, and a provisional contract was signed with the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company for the manufacture and laying of the cable. At the request of the latter, a British frigate was despatched to take new soundings in the Arabian Sea, and other preparations for the laying of a cable reached an advanced stage. But difficulties in the raising of the

⁵⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1870, No. 277, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 455, p. 19.

⁶² Joseph C. Parkinson, *The Ocean Telegraph to India. A Narrative and a Diary* (Edinburgh & London, 1870), pp. 4-5.

capital necessary to complete the work again commanded pause, as the Government consistently turned a deaf ear to all requests for a guarantee of the stipulated five per cent interest.⁶³

Still, prospects for profitable investment in a submarine telegraph reaching to India continued steadily to grow. A memorial, signed by some of the most influential merchants of London and presented to the Secretary of State for India in April, 1868, said:

The existing telegraphic communication with the East has been proved by the experience of three years' working to be altogether inadequate to the requirements of the age, and . . . notwithstanding the Government of India has made great efforts and spent large sums to improve the [Indo-European] line, the delays, uncertainty, inaccuracy, and irregularity in the transmission of messages continue as great as when the line was first opened. . . The present system of the existing land lines of telegraphic communication is unsound from beginning to end, and its defaults and failings are such that they cannot be ameliorated or overcome.⁶⁴

In view of the obvious need, a group of capitalists and promoters in January, 1869, organized themselves as the British Indian Submarine Telegraph Company and put their project on foot before the parent organization, the Anglo-Indian Company, had been dissolved. A large part of the proposed capital of £1,200,000 was subscribed by the promoters themselves and plans were made for completing eastern cable lines without recourse to Government aid.⁶⁵ The Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Co. undertook to manufacture and lay the cable upon terms which made them essentially large stockholders in the British concern.

Work progressed rapidly on the enterprise. Late in 1869 the manufacture of the cable was completed, and 3600 nautical miles of cable was loaded on shipboard for the voyage out to the Suez-Bombay line. The flagship of the cable-laying fleet was the giant paddle-wheel steamship *Great Eastern*, of 25,000 tons and nominal 3000 horsepower. This famous vessel was originally planned as the first of a fleet of six great passenger steamships to ply between Galle and Suez. Failing to make sufficient profits for her owners on her early voyages, she was stripped of much

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 6-13.

⁶⁴ H. A. L., *The Projected Sub-Marine Cable to India and Australia*, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 455, p. 3.

of her luxurious equipment, and cable tanks were placed where one set of boilers and one smoke-stack had originally been installed. In this unassuming but practical fashion, the *Great Eastern* "carried out her destiny in a way far different from that intended, but effective, nevertheless, in annihilating time and space and in bringing West and East together."⁶⁶

The *Great Eastern* alone went out to her work around the Cape of Good Hope, the other vessels with their less valuable cargoes being despatched by way of the recently opened Suez Canal.⁶⁷ While the lesser vessels laid sections of the cable in the Gulf of Suez and down the Red Sea, the *Great Eastern*, starting from the Bombay terminus early in February, 1870, proceeded in her epoch-making task of laying a line direct to Aden. Some difficulties were encountered in depositing the Red Sea cable, but the entire line between Suez and Bombay, with one way station at Aden, was completed and had successfully responded to tests by March 22.⁶⁸

Meanwhile the cables of the Falmouth, Gibraltar, and Malta Company were being submerged. By the end of May, another fleet of four vessels supplied by the cable manufacturers, the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, had completed the laying of this 2456 miles of undersea line, and the cable communication between Great Britain and India was complete.⁶⁹ The only land line remaining in this whole system was that across Egypt, which, indeed, remained the weakest link in the chain. However, this was a relatively short line, and few interruptions were experienced because of native tampering with the wires. Thus the old overland route had again been found to be the natural channel for British communication with the East. As in the case of steam communication, Egypt was found to be an obstacle, but not a barrier, and being a fundamental part of the most logical telegraphic route to the East inevitably assumed a more important position still in British eyes at the very moment when a French company had succeeded in piercing the Isthmus of Suez for a sea-level ship canal.

One other aspect of the completion of cable communication with India *via* Egypt is of some interest. The various lines which, taken together, comprised this cable system had been projected as alternative to those forming the Indo-European system. Almost from the outset, however, these Eastern lines, as

⁶⁶ Parkinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-190.

⁶⁷ Percy Fitzgerald, *The Great Canal at Suez*, II, 37 n.

⁶⁸ Parkinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-257. Parkinson, as a passenger on the *Great Eastern*, was an interested eye witness of the laying of the Indian cable.

⁶⁹ Parkinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-296.

they came to be called, because of their exemption from political surveillance and because of the greater speed and accuracy with which their messages were transmitted, became the main artery of intercommunication between West and East, relegating the Indo-European system, with its various tributaries and branch lines, to the position of an alternative route.

Far from greeting the advent of the new privately financed and politically independent lines with signs of satisfaction and evidence of support, government authorities both in England and in India actually discriminated in favor of the older Indo-European lines. The motives for this lack of coöperation were to be found principally in the fact that both British and Indian Governments retained certain vested interests in lines earlier constructed with which the new system actively competed.⁷⁰ The Government of India alone had spent some £800,000 on its Persian Gulf lines, and was in consequence not disposed to grant any of the several requests of the British Indian Company for telegraphic facilities in India, including the use of a special wire from Bombay to Calcutta. Indeed, since all telegraphs in India were Government controlled, the British Indian Company were compelled to establish their Bombay offices in the Government telegraph building, much to their disadvantage. Moreover, it was soon found that their service was seriously injured by the practice of Indian Government telegraph employees in routing by way of the Persian

⁷⁰ The following table, based on one given in *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 455, p. 5, will indicate the character of the lines leading to India at the end of 1870:

1. <i>Via</i> North Germany and Russia. . .	Indo-European Co.	From Bushire	} <i>Via</i> Indian Government Persian Gulf Lines.
2. <i>Via</i> the Netherlands and Russia. . .	Foreign Governments & Indo-European Co.		
3. <i>Via</i> Belgium, North Germany, and Russia.	Foreign Governments & Indo-European Co.		
4. <i>Via</i> the Netherlands and Turkey. . .	Foreign Governments		
5. <i>Via</i> Belgium and Turkey. . .	Foreign Governments	From Fao	
6. <i>Via</i> France, Austro-Germanic Union, and Turkey. . .	Foreign Governments		
7. <i>Via</i> France, Switzerland, and Turkey.	Foreign Governments		
8. <i>Via</i> France, Italy, and Turkey. . .	Foreign Governments		
9. <i>Via</i> France, Italy, and Med. Cables. . .	Private Company	} <i>Via</i> Red Sea Cable	} <i>Via</i> Red Sea Cable.
10. <i>Via</i> Falmouth, Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria cables. . .	Private Companies		

Gulf messages which were definitely marked by the sender "via Red Sea." Frequent petitions to the India Office against this malicious practice either were pigeonholed or were answered by promises to investigate the complaints.⁷¹

Out of the active opposition of the Indian Government and the passive neglect of the English authorities, a telegraphic confederation evolved. Soon after the organization of the Falmouth, Gibraltar, and Malta and British Indian Companies the need for coöperative endeavor led to the association of these two concerns with the Anglo-Mediterranean Company under the general direction of Mr. (later Sir) John Pender, Chairman of the British Indian Company.⁷² From an informal alliance, these companies soon became a definite association, under the management of a Joint Committee of Directors with offices at 66, Old Broad-Street, London. From time to time other telegraphic concerns representing branches or extensions of the original Mediterranean-Red Sea trunk line to India were brought into the system, until it became incorporated as the Eastern Associated Telegraph Companies, comprising in 1922, after various mergers of the original concerns had taken place, eleven different companies. These, serving almost every part of the Old World and much of the New, may be considered as a monument to Sir John Pender.⁷³

The establishment of steam lines connecting Great Britain with India was but the forerunner of a "comprehensive" system of steam communication with all parts of the East. Telegraphic lines followed the same order of development. The formation of the British Indian Submarine Telegraph Company was followed by the organization of the British India Extension Telegraph Company, for the purpose of carrying a cable from some point in India to Penang, Malacca, and Singapore.⁷⁴ This was immediately followed by a China Submarine Telegraph Company, to carry the cable from Singapore to Hong Kong and Shanghai, and the British Australian Telegraph Company, to carry a cable line from Singapore to Java and thence to Port Darwin. Together, these companies represented £1,585,000 in capital, subscribed for the construction of approximately 7000 miles of cable and land lines beyond India.⁷⁵ These lines, all a part of the Eastern Group, were

⁷¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 455, pp. 4 ff., 11, 20, 27-30, 33-35.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 7 *et passim*.

⁷³ *Fifty Years of "Via Eastern": A Souvenir and Record of the Celebration in Connection with the Jubilee of the Eastern Associated Telegraph Companies* (London, pr. print., 1922), pp. 14-16. The son of this pioneer, Sir John Denison-Pender, is at present Chairman of the Eastern Group.

⁷⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 455, pp. 15-18, *passim*.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 27; Parkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

in operation before the end of 1871, and went far toward accustoming the modern world to think in terms of vaster distances.

From time to time this great cable system was extended and improved as new needs arose and technical improvements in cable construction and electrical transmission were made. In 1875 duplex telegraphy, that is, the simultaneous sending of two messages over the same wire, was successfully applied to a section of cable in the Mediterranean, and within a few years the whole Eastern system had been modernized in this way.⁷⁶ Before the Great War many of the original cables had been duplicated and trebled in order to accommodate rapidly increasing demands for service. A network of "Eastern" cables extended throughout the Mediterranean, crossed Egypt by special wires and by two different routes,⁷⁷ and penetrated to almost all parts of the Orient where political or commercial interests were of any consequence. In 1870 the companies comprising the Eastern association owned and controlled but a very few thousand miles of submarine cable. By 1922 this had grown to 130,000 miles, and the officials of this system could then boast that "there is hardly any spot in the more developed parts of the British Empire and of the world which cannot speedily be reached by a message marked 'via Eastern.'"⁷⁸

The speed of transmission and reduction of sending rates kept pace with the extension of cable lines. In 1876 Egypt might be reached from England under good conditions in three or four hours, and Bombay might be brought into communication in about five hours. By 1900 a message could be sent from England to Egypt in a matter of twenty minutes, to Bombay in thirty-five minutes, to China in eighty, and to Australia in one hundred minutes. At the opening of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924 a message despatched from the Exhibition grounds by King George encircled the world over British lines and was received at the starting point eighty seconds later. In similar ratio has been the cost of telegraphic service. At the outset of telegraphic communication with India a 20-word message cost £5 1s., which greatly restricted the number of messages which could profitably be sent.⁷⁹ By 1891 a standard message over the same distance cost only 4s., less than one per cent of the original charge. The number of cable messages despatched in either direction naturally increased in proportion from a few dozen in

⁷⁶ Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁷⁷ J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is*, p. 252.

⁷⁸ *Fifty Years of "Via Eastern,"* p. 16. See pp. 92-95. Some 30,000 miles of new cable have been laid by this Group since the Armistice in 1918. These figures do not take into account many subsidiary land lines.

⁷⁹ Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 168; *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 26, 37, 151.

1870 to about 2,000,000 in 1895 and untold millions more recently over the whole of the system.⁸⁰

But improvements in telegraphic service between England and the East have by no means been confined to the submarine cables of the Eastern Group. The submarine cable lines to India were projected because of the advantages expected to accrue from lines entirely British owned and operated as against the land lines which came under several political administrations. This great handicap was to a great extent remedied, however, when, in 1869, Messrs. Siemens Brothers, German manufacturers of all kinds of electrical equipment, acting on concessions secured during the previous year, began the construction of a two-wire line from the Russian frontier at Alexandrovst *via* Odessa, Tiflis, Julfa, and Tabriz to Teheran, where it joined the wires of the Indian Government. Through wires were leased from other European Governments to complete a two-wire system under one control from England to Bushire, whence the Persian Gulf cable continued the line to India.⁸¹ Messrs. Siemens' enterprise was absorbed in 1870 by the Indo-European Telegraph Company, Ltd., which was able to compete successfully with the cable lines to India, although a greater proportion of profit was received from local messages.

The opening of the lines of the Indo-European Telegraph Company at the end of January, 1870, inaugurated a series of changes in important land lines in Asia. The British Government transferred its old line between Teheran and Bagdad to the Persian Government and built a new two-wire line between Teheran and Bushire. In December, 1872, a Convention was signed at Teheran between Great Britain and Persia providing for the addition of a third wire to the line between Teheran and Bushire, two of these to be employed entirely for international traffic.⁸² This arrangement proved to be so satisfactory that it remained unchanged for a number of years.⁸³

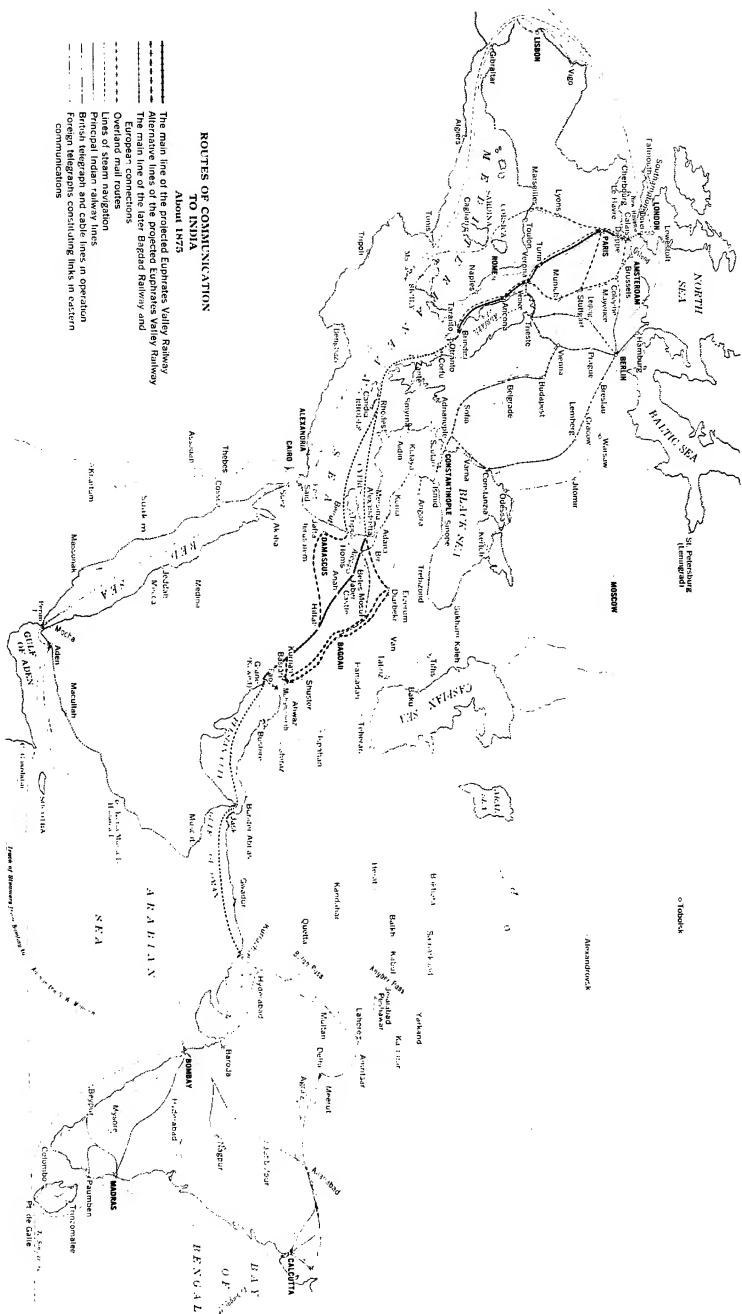
In 1898 advantages were seen by British authorities in the construction of a direct land line across southeastern Persia *via* Yedz, Kerman, Bam, and southwestern Baluchistan to Kurrachee. Surveys were begun for the line at once, but an Anglo-Persian Convention which provided for a three-wire line on iron posts, was

⁸⁰ *Fifty Years of "Via Eastern,"* pp. 94, 182, 190, 202.

⁸¹ Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 368.

⁸² *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXII, 262-266.

⁸³ Interruptions did occur now and then along the line between Shiraz and Shuster, due to the proclivities of the natives for tampering with the line, but the breaks were of short duration. See Arthur Arnold, *Through Persia by Caravan* (N. Y., 1877), pp. 193, 365-366.



ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

TO INDIA

Main line of the projected European Valley Railway

Alternative line of the projected European Valley Railway

The main line of the Great Eastern Railway

European connections

Oceanic connections

Lines of steam navigation

Principal Indian railway lines

Foreign telegraphs

Communications

postponed until August, 1901. This "Central Persian Line" was begun the next year and opened early in 1907. This completed an all-land line from England to India, excepting the Channel cables, to serve as a great alternative route to the all-British submarine cables.⁸⁴

The development of telegraphic lines to the East gave emphasis to the fact already made apparent by many factors that political conditions along the shores of the Mediterranean and, to a still greater extent, in the countries of western Asia and Egypt were of fundamental importance to British interests.⁸⁵ However, the concern with which the British Government viewed conditions in the Near and Middle East was greatly enhanced by the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez for commercial purposes just as lines of cable and land telegraph were effectively linking England and India. The steady growth of the Indian trade, the increase of British investments in Indian enterprises, and the development of telegraphic lines give a fair clue to British policies in the East after 1870, as the evolution of lines of steam communication do for the preceding half century.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ One of the concomitants of the development and extension of Persian telegraph lines toward India was the delimitation of the boundaries of eastern Persia. Between 1870 and 1873 the Makran and Sistan questions were settled, and other outstanding controversies were ended during the years 1896-1905. These settlements not only contributed to the efficiency of telegraphic communication but also greatly simplified every aspect of the international relations of the states concerned.—See Col. Sir Frederick J. Goldsmid, *Telegraph and Travel: A Narrative of the Formation and Development of a Telegraphic Communication between England and India* . . . (London, 1874); Sykes, *op. cit.*, II, 361-366.

⁸⁵ British exports to India in 1871 amounted to £20,181,145, and in 1872 to £26,977,869. Imports from India in 1871 totalled £12,986,083, and in 1872, £14,153,105.—*Statesman's Year Book*, 1873, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

⁸⁶ J. Henniker-Heaton, "The Postal and Telegraphic Communication of the Empire," in the *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, XIX (1887-1888), 170-221.

CHAPTER XVI

IMPROVEMENTS IN EASTERN COMMUNICATIONS

AFTER 1836 the overland route was semi-official for mails and despatches, and after 1839 the communications by this line were officially and regularly maintained. Thereafter mails and passengers passed through Egypt without interruption or hazard, although at this vital point the eastern communications were particularly vulnerable. The overland route was cherished by the Pasha because the tolls levied on the transit brought in considerable revenue.¹ And it was fostered by the English because of its invaluable economy in time over the Cape route.

In three very important respects, however, the overland route was not adequate for imperial purposes. It did not suffice for the transportation of large quantities of commercial goods, hence it was not primarily a commercial route, except for the sending of commercial papers. Only the cutting of a ship canal could supply that deficiency. In the second place, the line was strategically weak. As the overland portion crossed a portion of the Ottoman domain, it was not subject to British protection and control at all times. This was a serious situation, but it gave rise to still another difficulty. This route, at the outset, could not be used as a military high road. In view of the peculiar international status of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, the despatch of armed British forces through Egypt in either direction was likely to raise delicate issues of more than local import. As long as this limitation endured, the usefulness of the overland route was considerably impaired. But the exigencies of two wars, arising in very different spheres soon after the middle of the century, corrected this third deficiency before solutions of either of the others had yet been discovered.

The first extensive use of either the route through Egypt or

¹ It was stated before a Select Parliamentary Committee in 1858 that the net profit of the overland route to the Pasha at that time was about £30,000 per year. — *Parliamentary Paper*, 1858, No. 382, p. 94.

that through Mesopotamia for movements of British troops occurred during the Crimean War. Considering the nature of the more fundamental issues involved, the British Government deemed it appropriate to draw certain reënforcements from the Indian forces of the East India Company. During the first two months of 1855, two regiments of Indian Dragoons, consisting of 1600 men and 1400 horses, were safely transported through Egypt during the hot season for service in the Crimea. At the close of the war the horses were disposed of in Europe, but the men were returned to India by way of Egypt in August, 1856.² This, however, scarcely established a precedent by which British forces might be despatched through the Ottoman Empire in future, for the circumstances in 1855 were somewhat unique. Then Great Britain was in close alliance with one of the two European Powers which maintained a lively concern in eastern affairs, while the other was a mutual enemy; and the Turks, who were fighting for very existence, welcomed aid from every source. The fact that troops had been successfully transported through Egypt for European service, however, inevitably suggested the advantages of employing the route for military purposes when a great revolution broke out in India in 1857.³

Troops for the Persian War, which began in the early months of 1857, were drafted largely from the English regiments in India, and these were supplemented by other contingents sent out from England around the Cape. This emergency was not so great as to suggest measures to the British Cabinet looking toward the sending out of troops through Mesopotamia or through Egypt, and such a move does not appear to have been seriously considered. Far different, however, was the crisis created by the Indian Mutiny. The suddenness of this uprising and the magnitude of the interests at stake made it incumbent upon the British authorities at home to employ every practicable means to place reënforcements in India at the earliest possible moment. It was this stress of necessity which led to the reconsideration of the short cuts to India as military roads, and the rejection of the one and the adoption of the other.

The dramatic story of the outbreaks in India in the early months of 1857 has often been related. Such signs of disaffection as appeared in native regiments prior to April, 1857, were easily handled and were not looked upon as especially significant to more than a few officers in the Indian service.⁴ Questions re-

² *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv, 13, 14.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴ Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, stated just before his retirement in

garding the security of India raised in the House of Lords on May 19 were answered by the Minister of War, who said "that the intelligence recently received from India has not been such as to create any apprehension in the minds of Her Majesty's Ministers for the safety of our Indian dominions"; and similar solicitude expressed in the House of Commons as late as June 11 was likewise put to rest with the statement that "the public need be in no alarm, as the late disaffection among the troops in India had been put to an end."⁵

Meanwhile the storm had broken out. On May 10 and 11, at a time when the British portion of the Indian forces was 8000 or 9000 below the normal establishment, mutineers from Meerut seized Delhi and destroyed what Europeans they could. Before the end of May serious disaffection had appeared in almost every quarter of India, and such English forces as there were in India were gravely handicapped by the facts that many of their officers were away on leave and that the uprising occurred at the moment of a change in administration at Calcutta. The brightest spot in the dark situation was the existence of some 4500 miles of recently-completed Indian telegraphs, with which to maintain communication and coöperation among the forces in India.⁶ Telegraphic and cable communications between India and Europe were still incomplete, however, and it was only on the night of the twenty-sixth or morning of the twenty-seventh of June that a telegram reached London containing news of the more serious outbreaks. This message had been despatched from Calcutta on May 18, but it contained news from Madras of May 25 and from Bombay of May 27. This news was transmitted from Bombay to Suez and from Alexandria to Trieste by steamer. From the latter port continental land wires conveyed the message to London in about 20 hours. Forty precious days had been consumed in apprising the Court of Directors in London of the situation in India.⁷

The response to this situation on the part of the London authorities is of more than passing interest. Although the full import of the events in India was not yet known or even suspected, the Court of Directors at once recommended to the Board of

1857 that "India is now in perfect tranquillity from end to end. I entertain no apprehension whatever of danger or disturbance."—*Parl. Pap.*, 1857-1858, No. 70, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1858, No. 382, p. viii.

⁶ *The History of the Indian Revolt and of the Expeditions to Persia, China, and Japan*, in 1856-7-8, pp. 9, 92-93; Brig.-Gen. Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, II, 367.

⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, p. ix. Cf. *ibid.*, 1866, No. 428, p. 116.

Control that the overland route be employed for sending out small bodies of troops, whose early arrival in India would exert a great moral influence on the whole of India. This, in fact, was what one of the ringleaders of the Mutiny, Nana Sahib, had anticipated and feared as most likely to stop the course of the revolt.⁸ The Board of Control, however, represented by its President, Mr. Vernon Smith, in conference with other members of the British Cabinet, refused to act on the suggestion of the Directors of the Company, and ruled against the use of the overland route because of "political and other considerations." Even with despatches pouring in during the months of July and August, each showing more adequately than the last the enormous scope of the Indian upheaval and pleading for reënforcements by the quickest possible means, the Board, supported by the Cabinet, remained obdurate on the question of employing either the Euphrates or the overland route.

Instead, as the investigation of a Select Parliamentary Committee subsequently disclosed, such troops as were ready for service were despatched to India by the slowest means possible — sailing vessels around the Cape of Good Hope. Such a policy contained more of habit than of sound judgment. As the Parliamentary Committee surmised —

The maintenance of war under such unparalleled circumstances, from so vast a distance, and on such a scale of magnitude, is without example in history; must aggravate the arduousness of the national efforts to an extreme extent, and possibly, for a considerable period. . . . Hitherto, on all occasions, it has been the practice to effect the reliefs of regiments in India, by this long sea voyage, in sailing vessels. This habitude may, perhaps, partly account for the announcement of opinions on the part of the authorities of the Admiralty and of other departments, at the commencement of the late events, that sailing vessels would be still preferable to steamers for the conveyance of the troops.⁹

As the first excitement and confusion in Government circles gave place to better counsels, steamships were chartered to assist in the conveyance of troops around the Cape. Even here Government heads betrayed their lack of proper knowledge in generally choosing the older type of side-wheel steamships in preference to the more recent and much more efficient screw steamers. The first relief of India in this mortal crisis, then, was due not so much to

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

the halting and illogical efforts of London bureaucrats as to the patriotism and promptness of outlying parts of the Empire — Canada, Cape Colony, Mauritius, Ceylon, and others — which sent to India with all possible expedition such forces as they could spare.

Meanwhile, the overland route, which sufficed for the exchange of important despatches, remained unused for other military purposes. The Court of Directors and the Governors of the Indian Presidencies called attention to this highway to no avail. One of the first acts of the Bombay Government, upon receiving news of the outbreak at Meerut, was to despatch a steamship to Suez to receive the reënforcements it was assumed would immediately be despatched by that route.¹⁰ The Peninsular and Oriental Company's offers to place their great steam fleet at the Government's service were thanklessly refused. Ambassadors and consuls in Turkey and Egypt who reiterated their belief that no material obstacles existed to the transport of British troops through Ottoman territory were summarily informed that such was not the Government's intention.¹¹ Whatever they were, the "political and other considerations" remained too strong.

The nature of these political considerations has never fully been disclosed. The Committee which sat in 1858 to ascertain why aid was not more promptly sent to India felt itself precluded from inquiring into such matters. However, some of the political reasons for the unwillingness of the Government to make use of the overland route when the very existence of the Indian Empire was at stake gradually leaked out and can be examined with some confidence.

It was the popular supposition at the time that either the Turkish or the Egyptian Government, or both, felt some justifiable hesitation in permitting the use of lines traversing Ottoman territory by British troops either because of the danger of establishing such a precedent or because of objections which would be raised by other European Powers. This was not the case.¹² It developed subsequently that both the Turkish and Egyptian Governments were more than willing to assist in the transport of troops and supplies by any practicable route. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who was denied permission to ask leave of the Turkish Government at the first news of the Mutiny for the passage of troops through Egypt, was instructed to make such a request several weeks later. In response, the Sultan, surprised at the delay of the British Government, not only gave assent immediately,

¹⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, p. 171.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 119.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

but, on October 5, issued a special *firman* for the purpose.¹³ His vassal, the Khedive, was even more willing to give full permission for the use of the overland route as a military highway, though his motives, of course, were far from being disinterested. When it was first officially suggested to him that, in order to minimize whatever political objections there might be, small bodies of troops be despatched through Egypt *en bourgeois*, that is, in civilian clothes and minus their military equipment, he was quoted as having burst out that he would arrange for the transport, not merely of 200 men, but of 20,000 if necessary, in uniform and with their arms. And on another occasion he added, "I will not consider them as transit passengers, but as my own, and will carry them by my own private engines, carriages, and trucks."¹⁴

Probably the Government's hesitation at first to use the overland route for military purposes was due to the knowledge that such a departure would be displeasing to the late ally, France, with whom relations were not very cordial since the war with Russia. While the Euphrates Valley Railway was still being favored by British authorities, there are evidences that the French Government displayed an unwillingness to approve the use of the overland route for the movement of troops.¹⁵ The Euphrates project, however, was thrown over by Palmerston about the middle of August, and it was doubtless more than a coincidence that late in that month the British Cabinet considered the chief political difficulties at an end and set about securing the consent of Ottoman authorities which might have been obtained for the asking months before.¹⁶ It was generally known in September that the Emperor Napoleon no longer had objections to the use of the route through Egypt for the relief of India.¹⁷ Early in October, the Emperor despatched a communication to London offering to facilitate the use of the overland route by permitting British troops to pass through France to Marseilles *en route* to Egypt and India.¹⁸ Thus, it was only after nearly three months of delay that the most formidable difficulties which stood in the way of the most effectual method of relieving India were removed.

At the same time there had been "other considerations" also which had postponed the use of the overland route. These were bound up with the belief held by Vernon Smith and other in-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 227. Cf. p. 184.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 160; *History of the Indian Revolt*, p. 502.

¹⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. xvii, 25, 27, 135, 152, 154; *The Annual Register*, 1857, Pt. II, p. 228.

¹⁷ *The Panmure Papers* II, 435.

¹⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. xix, 190.

fluent men that Egypt and the Red Sea would be highly injurious to the health of troops sent in considerable numbers during the hot season.¹⁹ The remarkable physical condition of the troops brought to the Crimea during the hot season by this route and the opinions of experienced men of all ranks were not sufficient to overcome the ingrained prejudice on this point. Even after thousands of troops had actually been sent out by this route in safety and comfort, the President of the Board of Control still upheld the wisdom of employing the Cape route.²⁰

By the end of September the India Board had overcome its aversion from the overland route to a large extent, and the East India Company arranged the details of the despatch of troops. The first unit, numbering 200 men, was despatched from Plymouth on September 30. Thirty-seven days later this regiment arrived at Bombay. Other troops, despatched from Malta about the same time, reached Bombay in sixteen to eighteen days. Still other troop units were sent out overland at regular intervals by the fortnightly mail steamers until well into the next year. The Peninsular and Oriental Company was relied upon for transportation facilities on either side of Egypt, even, as agents for the Viceroy's Transit Administration, assuming responsibility for the passage through Egypt.

This portion of the journey was greatly simplified by the main line of Egyptian Railway, which bridged the distance between Alexandria and Cairo, about 130 miles. From Cairo the railway was complete in 1857 only to Station No. 12 in the desert, distant 58 miles from Cairo. Troops and civilians covered the remaining distance to Suez, about 25 miles, in vans, each accommodating six persons, and requiring about ten hours for the journey. In this way, with a considerable number of vans in readiness, large groups could be transported with considerable facility. In fact, at the height of the troop movement, the entire passage through Egypt was completed in little more than 50 hours.²¹ At Suez a small steam tender, *Alma*, carried the men either to the mail steamer waiting in the anchorage, or to the hulk of the old Bombay Marine steamer *Zenobia*, which was fitted up as a sort of floating hotel to accommodate as many as 300 men at a time pending the arrival of the contract mail steamship.²² Before the first of March, 1858,

¹⁹ *History of the Indian Revolt*, pp. 222, 223. The unfinished state of the Suez Railway was one source of doubt concerning the overland route.

²⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. 121, 125, *passim*.

²¹ Anon., *Railways in Egypt; Communication with India* (London, 1857), pp. 15-18.

²² *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. 56, 93, 170; *History of the Indian Revolt*,

approximately 5000 officers and men, out of a total of 40,000 sent out, had arrived in India *via* the overland route, and all with little inconvenience.²³

The suppression of the revolt was aided to a considerable extent by the adoption of this route, though the failure of the Government to employ it earlier was the source of great bitterness to those who realized the saving in lives and property which would have been effected if the overland route had been adopted at the outset.²⁴ After 1857 the overland route was employed very largely in sending out reinforcements to India, and the passage of British troops in uniform through Egypt became a sight so familiar as not to excite comment.²⁵

The wide conviction that the Company had blundered or had been negligent led to the demand of several members of the House of Commons for an investigating committee early in the session of 1858.²⁶ A Select Committee was duly appointed on February 4, "to inquire concerning the measures resorted to, or which were available, and as to the Lines of Communication adopted for reinforcing our Army during the pending Revolt in India, and to report thereon to the House, with a view to ascertaining the arrangements which should be made towards meeting any future important emergencies involving the security of our Eastern Dominions."²⁷

This Committee, consisting of eighteen men experienced in Indian affairs, made a thorough study of the means available for the transport of troops to India during the early days of the Mutiny. It was soon discovered that the failure to employ the overland route at the outset was not due, as had widely been supposed, to the Company's policy, but rather to that of the British Cabinet, which believed that material obstacles stood in the way, and particularly to the prejudice of the President of the Board of Control,

p. 222 n. Even though the railway was incomplete, the desert had been robbed of its principal terror, for large iron water tanks had been stationed at five-mile intervals, all the way from Cairo to Suez, kept supplied by long trains of camels. Thus travellers and goods might proceed across the desert independently of the railway.

²³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. 38, 280, 297. There was some complaint that the vessels sailing from Suez were too crowded to admit of comfortable sleeping quarters, especially since each steamer carried a considerable quota of passengers. This does not seem to have occasioned any real distress, however. The military hospital established at Suez had very few cases to attend to.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xxvii; "Investigator," *Our Ocean Steam Postal Communications: Their Cost and National Advantages* (London, 1867), p. 11.

²⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 75-76, *passim*.

²⁶ *History of the Indian Revolt*, p. 501 n.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 502, n.; *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, p. [iii].

Mr. Vernon Smith, who failed to urge or even to approve the use of the overland route at any time.²⁸

After careful sifting of the evidence, the Committee's findings upheld the Company's officers on all points. Their report, submitted on July 1, said in part —

It would have been desirable, independently of political considerations, to have taken advantage of the Overland Route at the earliest possible period, and, apart from such considerations, it is much to be regretted that the steps that were taken in September to transmit small bodies of troops by this route were not resorted to at an earlier date. . .

On the whole, considering the suddenness of the danger, and the distance to which troops were to be sent, the Committee are of opinion that great credit is due to the Court of Directors of the East India Company for the promptitude and efficiency with which they discharged the difficult task of transmitting reinforcements to the Army in India during the past year.²⁹

This report was supplemented by a detailed and analytical memorandum, wherein the credit and blame for the sending of reinforcements to India were more carefully assessed. In this the Committee laid serious charges at the door of the Cabinet, pointing out that British military officers of all ranks had been passing to and fro through Egypt for years with the tacit consent of all Europe. The fact that India was saved to the British Crown at all was ascribed to the early arrival in India of British forces from Persia and the heroism of such forces as were available for action.³⁰

These findings, however, instead of giving the East India Company a new lease of life for having acquitted itself so creditably during the emergency, actually had the effect of calling attention to the divided responsibility under which India was controlled. To obviate this, Parliament presently determined to assume for the British Government the whole burden of the Indian Administration. On August 2, 1858, was passed "An Act for the Better Government of India," which terminated the life of the East India Company.³¹ Thus, the English people as a whole became

²⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. xviii-xxv, xxvii, 36-40, 117-128, 151-157.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. [iii]-[iv].

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv-xxvii.

³¹ 21 & 22 Victoria, cap. 106. As the British Government took over the government of India, so it made definite provision for supplying regular military reinforcements by building or purchasing five transport vessels in 1866, which were kept in regular service during most of the remainder of the century. — *Parl. Pap.*, 1860, No. 480; 1865, No. 159; 1867-1868, No. 471.

the heirs of an empire which, although begun and developed as an exclusive commercial enterprise, had been peculiarly a national undertaking from the first. It was only recognizing a situation already long existent when, in 1876, Parliament passed the Royal Titles Bill and conferred on Queen Victoria the title of Empress of India.

The real or imaginary political considerations which postponed the adoption of the overland route for troop movements in 1857 never rose again, and afterward the route was completely established for communications of all kinds. The Cape route retained the single advantage of being cheaper than the route through Egypt, partly because of the high passage rates charged by the Peninsular and Oriental Company and partly because of the Viceroy's tolls on mails and passengers.³² The Euphrates Valley route, too, was defeated and discredited. Having failed to emerge from the twilight zone of promotive schemes on a very critical occasion, it was doomed to remain a wandering spirit, often seen and heard but never quite able to materialize. Before the end of 1858 the Suez Railway was completed — thanks to British capital and engineering — and the overland route began to attain some prominence as a commercial route. Before the Suez Canal was opened, fine goods with an estimated value of many thousands of pounds were annually being sent through Egypt.³³ With the organization of the Red Sea and India Telegraph Company in 1858 and the completion of plans for the carrying of a telegraph line across Egypt in connection with the laying of submarine cables to India,³⁴ the supremacy of the overland route was assured. From being an almost insuperable obstacle, Egypt had become no more than a brief and often welcome interlude in an otherwise monotonous passage.

The return to normal conditions after the confusion of mid-century wars found postal arrangements between England and India and the Australian colonies quite inadequate. In the few years since the comprehensive plan of eastern communication had been adopted, needs had largely grown. Moreover, some features of the postal system established before the opening of the Crimean War had been seriously disrupted, owing to the with-

³² *Parl. Pap.*, 1858, No. 382, pp. 177, 185-187, 188, 170 ff. The Viceroy's charge for the passage of enlisted men was £5 per head; for officers, £10 each, and the same amount for civilian passengers.

³³ Anon., *Railways in Egypt*, pp. iv-v; *The P. & O. Pocket Book* (3d Issue), p. 10; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXLVI, 1385-1388.

³⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 90, 184; Charles Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs: Their History, Construction, and Working*, p. 57.

drawal of mail steamships for use in connection with war activities, while new mail contracts had been made in haste as emergency measures.³⁵

Overland mails to the East had employed either of two routes between England and Egypt since 1837. Either they followed the line first developed by the Admiralty packets from Southampton to Alexandria *via* Gibraltar and Malta, or they were despatched *via* Calais and Paris to Marseilles and thence through the Mediterranean. The latter line, provided for by a Postal Convention in 1839, proved to be so advantageous that it came to be looked upon as a permanent arrangement. But as the reduction of time in the transit of mails was ever an aim of the authorities in England and in India, the development of routes across the Continent, which promised to effect further savings of time, received much attention and led to a reconsideration of routes and time tables.

The completion of railway lines about 1861 between Channel ports and the Alps and in northern Italy suggested the possibility of employing some Italian port, preferably on the Adriatic, in place of Marseilles for the arrival and departure of eastern mails.³⁶ This project was first brought to the attention of the English Post Office by the new Italian Government in June, 1861, in the form of a suggestion that Ancona be considered as a postal terminus. At that time railway lines were practically complete between Calais and Ancona *via* Paris and Turin, with the exception of a considerable break at Mont Cenis in the Alps. The adoption of this route, the Italians believed, would effect a saving in mail transmission of twenty-two hours, with the prospect of a further reduction within a few years of sixteen more.³⁷

The Post Office authorities of India, who were perhaps more concerned about speed than the home authorities, instantly responded to the suggestion and urged immediate adoption of the Italian route. English postal officials, however, with characteristic caution, undertook a detailed investigation of the possibilities of the proposed route before committing themselves in the slightest degree. Information supplied by English consular officers in Italy verified the assertion that the port of Ancona was 420 miles nearer Alexandria than was Marseilles, and as communication by rail was much faster than by steam packets, there was a strong presumption that by shifting termini a considerable time saving

³⁵ G. W. Wheatley, *The Oriental Companion and Overland Guide for Travellers to and from India, Aden, Mauritius, Ceylon, China, Australia, &c., via Egypt* (London, 1858), 90 pp.

³⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1860, No. 95, "The Acceleration of the Night Mail to Calais."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1866, No. 428, App., pp. 291-293.

would be effected. But as the investigation progressed, substantial problems began to loom up. The new Italian railways were for the most part of single track. Their roadbeds were not well ballasted. They were inadequately equipped with rolling stock and were operated by inexperienced staffs. It appeared doubtful, therefore, whether they could maintain their advertised schedules.³⁸

These were not the most serious difficulties. It developed that the port of Ancona, in spite of enthusiastic statements by Italian ministers, did not possess the necessary requisites for mail communication. It had no adequate wharves and docks, and the harbor bar would not admit large mail steamers. The whole question of mail contracts was also involved. If the Peninsular and Oriental Company altered their service to include the proposed line from Ancona to Alexandria, they would still expect subsidies in proportion to the trouble and expense involved.³⁹ English authorities were not impressed with offers from a newly-organized Italian company for the carriage of mails in the Mediterranean. The correlation of schedules with the arrival and departure of vessels from Suez offered other problems. Additional obstacles were found in the Mont Cenis road over the Alps, the crossing of international boundaries, and the necessity for frequent re-handling of mails. Considering the difficulties involved, and the fact that regularity and dependability were more important than speed, the Postmaster General, Lord Stanley of Alderley, concluded that the prospective advantages of the Italian line did not counterbalance the known merits of the route through France.⁴⁰

Count Cavour, however, refused to let the plan for an Italian mail route die. By the autumn of 1863 the Ancona line of railway had been extended nearly to Brindisi, and negotiations with English authorities were renewed looking toward the passage of eastern mails through Brindisi, and the saving of additional time in postal schedules. This was not immediately followed up. A new impulse was given to the plan in 1865 by the commencement of a mountain railway by the English engineer, Fell, to link up the Italian railway system with that of the French over the Mont Cenis Pass — a distance of about 48 miles. An English army engineer, Capt. H. W. Tyler, was detailed to inspect and report on the advisability of transmitting mails by this line. He reported in July, 1866,⁴¹ quite favorably, on the whole. Harbor improve-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294, *passim*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1860, No. 396.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 295-313.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, No. 466, "Eastern Mails (Italian Route): Report from Capt. Tyler, R. E."

ments at Brindisi, the Mont Cenis Summit Railway, and local changes on Italian railways awaited completion, but the outlook for the near future was distinctly promising.

During these years such rapid strides in material improvement of all kinds were being made that confident prediction of lines of communication, even in the immediate future, became impossible. No sooner had the Mont Cenis Summit Railway been completed than a Mont Cenis Tunnel was projected. By the time the projected improvements had been completed on the Mont Cenis-Brindisi route, with an Italian steamship concern, the *Società Anonima Italiana di Navigazione Adriatico Orientale*, operating fast vessels between Brindisi and Alexandria, the line to Marseilles had been improved, and another one offering new advantages had been completed to the Italian frontier through Germany.⁴²

Early in 1869 Capt. Tyler was again despatched to the Continent to report on the German-Italian route. He carefully examined the entire line, from Ostend, the Channel terminus, *via* Ghent, Brussels, Liege, Cologne, Mayence, Stuttgart, Munich, and the Brenner Pass to Verona, whence the line reached the Italian railways and provided a connection with Brindisi. The advantages of the line were found to be several. It possessed the political advantage of being independent of France, while offering easy access from Calais *via* Brussels, and from Paris *via* Stuttgart. Also, the partial unification of the German states and Bismarck's forward railway policies provided a uniformity in railway operation not possible a few years earlier. Although this line measured some 150 miles longer than that *via* Paris and the Mont Cenis, the time required by the two routes was approximately the same.⁴³

Now that mails were despatched to India weekly instead of four times per calendar month, Capt. Tyler believed that all of the European routes might be used to advantage. Already the eastern mails sent from Southampton *via* Gibraltar each Wednesday were overtaken at Alexandria by the mails despatched *via* Paris and Marseilles on Friday. Capt. Tyler proposed that supplementary mails be made up on Saturday of each week and sent by special mail and passenger express trains by either or both of the new routes to Brindisi, whence they would reach Alexandria in time to proceed to India in the weekly Peninsular and Oriental steamers.

These routes, *via* Marseilles, *via* the Mont Cenis, and *via* the Brenner [said Capt. Tyler], will themselves be only provisional, pending the advance of railway communication

⁴² *Parl. Pap.*, 1868, No. 1, pp. 7-10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1869, No. 177, p. 6; *Illustrated London News*, 16 Jan., 1869.

through the south-east of Europe and through the west of Asia. The lines by Constantinople and the Euphrates Valley, and over the Greek frontier to Cape Sunium, so near to the Suez Canal, have yet to be constructed; and the hope of the Indian traveller of the next generation, chimerical as it may appear to many at present, must be nothing less than to pass dryshod from London to Bombay — through a submarine tunnel from Dover to Calais — through Europe by railway — over the Bosphorus by a bridge; and forward by railway down the Euphrates valley and round the Persian Gulf to Bombay.⁴⁴

From an engineering point of view, such a vision was perfectly justified. It failed, however, to take into account the many political problems which leave the project of a through land route to the East a program still unrealized.

Capt. Tyler's immediate proposals carried considerable weight. Within the following year the so-called Supplementary Route was regularly employed, with additional rates of postage, for mails *via* Brindisi, while other communications, marked *via* Marseilles, or *via* Southampton, followed these earlier lines at reduced rates.⁴⁵ During the Franco-German War, the Ostend-Verona route to Brindisi was employed to good advantage in place of the lines crossing France. After 1870, with some alterations from time to time in the continental lines from the English Channel to Italy, Brindisi served as the principal European port for oriental mail communications until the Great War. The route *via* Marseilles continued to be employed, and the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée Railway was popular with thousands of Levantine and oriental travellers. By the beginning of the twentieth century Boulogne had replaced Calais as the continental port of entry for mails on the Marseilles line. Soon after the opening of the World War, Marseilles and Toulon entirely replaced the Italian ports of Brindisi and Taranto, served by the Peninsular and Oriental and the Orient lines respectively, as continental mail ports.⁴⁶

The comprehensive plan of eastern communication, as inaugurated early in the fifties, provided a skeleton plan for future growth and improvement. The Peninsular and Oriental Company, the first contractors for the service, at once embarked on a program of building and buying new vessels on this basis. They established permanent bases at Hong Kong, Calcutta, Sydney and

⁴⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1869, No. 177, pp. 7, 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1870, Nos. 62, 312.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1917, Report of an Imperial Shipping Committee.

Bombay, including extensive docking facilities, especially at the latter port. Better accommodations were provided for passengers. The factor of safety was improved to a commendable degree. Speed was improved on the long eastern lines, from about eight knots per hour in 1851 to a contract speed of nine and one-half knots on the Bombay line and about ten knots in the Mediterranean in 1866.⁴⁷

During the same interval the Company had built up a fleet of fifty-seven steam vessels, the newer ones nearly 3000 tons in size. Most of these were in service east of Suez. Mails which were conveyed from London to Bombay in 28 to 35 days in 1850 covered the same distance in an average of 24 days fifteen years later. Passage rates still remained high in spite of substantial subsidies. This was partly due to a falling off of the Peninsular and Oriental trade, owing to growing competition and the cost of fuel for the eastern steamers. Nevertheless, the fare first class from Bombay to London in 1866 was £70, which was but little more than the rate from Southampton to Alexandria fifteen years before, and the number of passengers carried continued to grow.

About 1865 the Peninsular and Oriental Company commenced a fortnightly service to Shanghai with an extension to Japan. Although mails were carried, no subsidy was received for this service at the time. This line alternated with a similar one carried by the French *Messageries Impariales*, thus giving the Far East frequent European connections. The steam route originally opened to Australia by way of Singapore and Torres Straits did not prove practicable. Early in the sixties it gave place to a monthly line running from Point de Galle to Sydney by way of King George Sound and Melbourne — a service requiring approximately fifty-five days from Southampton in 1864.

New services were meanwhile being established partly to supplement and frequently to compete with the Peninsular and Oriental monopoly. About 1860 the Bombay and Bengal Steam Ship Company began the formation of a merchant marine capable of securing some of the trade previously handled by the Peninsular and Oriental Company. A more vigorous rival organization was born in 1856 when the Scotch firm of Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Company, long established at Calcutta, formed the Calcutta and Burmah Steam Navigation Company to carry goods and mails fortnightly between Calcutta, Akyab, Rangoon, and Moulmein. The Mutiny and various disasters nearly ruined the Company, but with

⁴⁷ "A Practical Man," *The Postal Improvement with India Question: Administrative Reform Wanted* (Manchester, 1866), p. 14; Thomas Nelson and Sons (Publishers), *The Overland Route to India and China* (London, 1859).

an increase in capital it was able to embark in 1861 on a system of steam communication extending from the Persian Gulf on the one hand to Malacca and Singapore on the other. By the end of 1863, with a fleet of seventeen steamers and four more building, the Calcutta and Burmah Company became the British India Steam Navigation Company, Ltd.⁴⁸ The lines of this concern continued steadily to expand until it could aspire to compete with the Peninsular and Oriental Company on the Suez line.

The Company was unsuccessful in attempts to secure British subsidies for carriage of the overland mails, but it did establish a very important service in Arabian and Persian waters. At the outset mails, passengers, and some quantities of goods were carried from Bombay to the ports of the Persian Gulf once in six weeks the year through. By 1864 this had become a monthly service, subsidized by the Indian Government. At Basrah the British Indian vessels established connection with the river steamers of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, which kept up the communication with Bagdad.⁴⁹ In 1866 the Company established a new line, subsidized by the Dutch Government, from Indian ports to the Dutch East Indies. By the time of the opening of the Suez Canal, the Company and its subsidiaries owned a fleet of more than fifty fine steamships, and had become the second largest shipping concern in the East.

At varying intervals throughout the remainder of the century other steam lines made their appearance in eastern waters and challenged the proud supremacy of the Peninsular and Oriental.⁵⁰ The first of these to represent other than British capital was the French *Compagnie des Services Maritimes des Messageries Impériales*. This concern, which at the outset received a subsidy for carrying French and other European mails three times that of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, first invaded Indian waters in 1861. The initial undertaking was to establish a monthly communication between Suez and Bombay with seven or eight vessels considerably larger than those of the Peninsular and Oriental.⁵¹

This attempt succeeded and the line was extended within the

⁴⁸ *The Blue Peter*, I, No. 3, 65-67.

⁴⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1900, No. [Cd. 131.], p. 94; *The Blue Peter*, I, No. 2, p. 47. After the Karun River was opened up in 1888, the Lynch Brothers placed steamers on that stream which operated in connection both with their Tigris line and with the British Indian service. This service is still maintained, though under one ownership, the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company having been absorbed by the Peninsular and Oriental System.

⁵⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1860, No. 532; *ibid.*, No. 328, pp. iv, 42, 44-45, 308; *ibid.*, 1867-1868, No. 19, pp. 3-5; W. Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates Valley Route to India*, pp. 64-66.

⁵¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 69, 81, 244, 538-539.

next few years to Calcutta and thence to China and Japan. By 1866 the Company had a fleet of twelve vessels in eastern waters, synchronizing with a line from Marseilles to Alexandria and several other subsidiary lines in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. They were then building extensive docks at Suez, with money supplied by the Pasha, with a view to the utilization of the Suez Canal immediately upon its opening.⁵² The financial strength of this company, its fine and comfortable vessels and fast, sustained speed cut deeply into the business of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, especially in connection with passenger transportation. The two companies reached a kind of understanding with regard to passage rates to and from India, however, and travellers were denied the benefits of a rate war.

Further development of English communications east of Suez awaited the outcome of a Parliamentary investigation during the sixties which resulted from a widespread conviction that the comprehensive scheme of communication, as inaugurated early in the fifties, had not developed in proportion to growing needs.⁵³ It had once been thought that a weekly mail to India would provide an adequate service long hoped for. But while all parts of India were served by the mails which came alternately to Bombay and to Calcutta every two weeks, no single section of that extensive empire enjoyed a weekly communication with Europe. Bombay and the northwest provinces received no portion of the bi-weekly mail which went *via* Galle and Madras to Calcutta, and so enjoyed only twenty-four mails per year in each direction. One portion of each of the Bombay mails, however, was destined to be sent overland by *dâk* to Calcutta and Madras, and in theory those centres received communications weekly. As it worked out, however, the distances from Suez to the east coast of India were so long, as compared with the voyage to Bombay, that the mails despatched overland from Bombay reached the eastern cities nearly as soon as the mails brought by sea which had left England over a fortnight earlier. As the network of Indian Railways grew, and lines which would link Bombay with Calcutta and Madras approached completion, the fortnightly mail service to the latter ports became less and less essential.⁵⁴ The passenger traffic of Calcutta and Madras still demanded regular steamship service, but with the completion of the railways mentioned, it was to be anticipated that a large portion of those travelling to or from the cities of eastern India would prefer to use the overland lines

⁵² *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 68, 75, 561-562.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1865, No. 211.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1866, No. 428, pp. 13, 14, 123, *passim*.

to Bombay in preference to enduring a long sea voyage around India and Ceylon.⁵⁵

In other respects the alternative plan of communications was not satisfactory. English economic interests and the English population in India were increasing more rapidly than means of communication were developing.⁵⁶ Moreover, not only in India but throughout the East British interests were served, as to mails, entirely by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, which, having no real competitors along this line, enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the overseas communications. For developing and maintaining these eastern lines, this concern was heavily subsidized, its directors having been able virtually to write their own contracts with the English Post Office. Since 1854, when the Peninsular and Oriental Company took over the Bombay line from the vessels of the Indian Navy, that Company had been able either to underbid competitors for mail contracts or to convince the English authorities of its superior resources and equipment and to secure the awards. The Anglo-Indians almost uniformly believed that they were at the mercy of a soulless corporation whose only concern was to pay high dividends to stockholders by charging exorbitant rates for imperfect service.

Complaints of the irregularity of mail contracts first brought about the appointment of a Select Parliamentary Committee in 1860 to inquire into "the manner in which contracts extending over periods of years have from time to time been formed or modified by Her Majesty's Government with various steam packet companies for the conveyance of mails by sea."⁵⁷ The principal result was to bring about the passage of an Act of Parliament, even before the formal report of the Committee had been handed in, centralizing more powers and functions in the Post Office Department.⁵⁸ This lessening of the evils of bureaucracy had a decidedly salutary effect on the relative efficiency of the mail packet service in the future.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. vi, 64, 67, 125-126; *ibid.*, 1860, No. [C. 2669]. The Indian railway program looked toward the completion of lines between Calcutta, Bombay, and the North West Provinces in the spring of 1868, and the opening of a line between Madras and Bombay in July, 1869.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1866, No. 428, App., pp. 531-537. In 1866 British India imported goods to the amount of more than £37,400,000, and exported commodities to the value of more than £18,250,000.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1860, No. 328.

⁵⁸ Act 23 Victoria, cap. 6; *Parl. Pap.*, 1860, No. 328, pp. 465-466, 469-471. In addition to the financial control previously exercised by the Treasury and the marine functions pertaining to the Admiralty, the Colonial Office frequently had to be consulted on postal matters, while to the Foreign Office fell the task of negotiating postal conventions and the like.

This one progressive step, however, was not sufficient to stifle the widespread demands for further improvement. In 1866 another Select Committee was appointed "to inquire into the practical working of the present system of telegraphic and postal communications between this country and the East Indies . . . China, Japan, Australia, and the Mauritius."⁵⁹ This investigation disclosed, among other things, the fact that the British Post Office was more concerned with costs than with service, and that between this department and the Peninsular and Oriental Company there existed a "very comfortable understanding";⁶⁰ that the speed maintained by the mail packets, especially east of Suez, was not adequate; and that the portion of postal subsidies borne by the Indian Exchequer was unduly heavy, considering that the British portion of the Indian trade was one-fourth that of the whole Empire.⁶¹ The Committee made specific suggestions for improvement on these points. It was recommended that Bombay be made the principal door to India and the distributing point for a weekly mail, that the speed of mail steamers be increased materially, and costs reapportioned.⁶²

It required some years for carrying these recommendations into effect. Early in 1867 a weekly service to Bombay was undertaken on an experimental basis, but the cost was considered too heavy by the Post Office,⁶³ and the service was discontinued. This left Bombay until 1870 practically two mails per month, four mails, as before, being carried to Madras and Calcutta.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the approaching completion of De Lesseps' Suez Canal and the likelihood that this waterway would considerably affect the working of eastern lines materially contributed to an indefinite postponement of any major changes in communication plans. In spite of a great deal of criticism and hostility from many quarters, the Peninsular and Oriental Company continued to enjoy what was, to all intents and purposes, a monopoly of the mail routes to the East.

⁵⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. [iii].

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130. The English Post Office even entered into important postal contracts with the Peninsular and Oriental Company while the Committee were arriving at conclusions opposed to contracts of that type.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. ix, *passim*; "A Practical Man," *op. cit.*, p. 11, *passim*; Anon., *Postal Improvement with India Question: Administrative Reform Wanted* (London, 1866).

⁶² *Parl. Pap.*, 1866, No. 428, p. xv.

⁶³ At this time subsidies for the India and China mails averaged 4s. 6d. per mile of the distance traversed, of which the sea postage of 4d. per single letter (one-half ounce) contributed but a small proportion.

⁶⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1867, No. 405; 1868, No. 1, pp. 4-31; "Investigator," *Our Ocean Steam Postal Communications: Their Cost and National Advantages*, pp. 3-5; *The Economist*, 15 Sept., 1877.

The opening of the Suez Canal did not result in the immediate reduction of time for the carriage of eastern mails. Mail contracts with the Peninsular and Oriental Company in force in 1870 provided for the use of the Egyptian Railway for the overland transit, and a series of Conventions between the British and Egyptian Governments regularized this by stipulating what sums should be paid the Viceroy of Egypt for the conveyance of the mails in sealed packages by the English Post Office in Egypt.⁶⁵ Hence, as soon as the Peninsular and Oriental mail steamers began using the canal, they were under the necessity of landing the mails at Alexandria or at Suez, as the case may have been, and then of continuing through the canal with their cargoes and such passengers as wished to avoid the discomfort of travelling through Egypt. Another stop was then made to take on the mails and passengers which had passed through Egypt by rail and the voyage was continued. This, instead of expediting the service, actually retarded it.⁶⁶

A partial improvement of this situation was effected in 1874, when, by arrangements with the Peninsular and Oriental Company for a partial abatement of their subsidy, followed by a new Convention with the Egyptian Government, mail packets from England *via* Gibraltar no longer stopped at Alexandria but proceeded on to the East through the canal.⁶⁷ At the same time the British Post Office reiterated its belief in the greater speed and safety of transmitting the mails through Egypt by rail, and the Brindisi mails continued to follow that route. This was, perhaps, not wholly unnatural in view of the fact that the railway represented British enterprise, while the canal was a French undertaking. It was only after the British Government had acquired a large interest in the canal that the attitude of the Post Office officials altered materially.

In 1877 another Convention provided for the abolition of the English Post Office in Egypt and placed the transmission of English mails in the hands of the Egyptian Government under the care of English Post Office agents.⁶⁸ But it was only in 1888, when the Peninsular and Oriental Company had consented to an abatement of nearly £100,000 in their subsidy, that permission

⁶⁵ *British and Foreign State Papers*, LII, 53 (1858); *ibid.*, LVI, p. 33 (1866); *ibid.*, LXIII, pp. 179, 313-316 (1873); *Hertslet's Commercial Treaties*, XII, 413-422. The line of the railway between Cairo and Suez had been relocated in 1870, providing much better gradients and avoiding the worse portions of the desert. — J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is*, p. 229.

⁶⁶ *The Blue Peter*, I, 45.

⁶⁷ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXV, 12, 13.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, LXVIII, 633-634.

was given for the transmission of all mails through the canal.⁶⁹ This officially brought to an end the British overland route, the establishment of which had been attended with such momentous consequences almost exactly half a century before. Travellers often continued to make their way through Egypt by rail to vary a tedious voyage through the canal, but as a route for trade and communication, the overland route was no more.

The re-routing of the mails and subsequent improvements in land and water transportation made possible considerably better postal communication and passenger transportation within the next generation. Those courageous men who labored hard and risked much that Bombay, the nearest port of India, might be brought within 40 days of London would have been incredulous that the same distance would, within three score years, be traversed by steamships in a fortnight. The remotest parts of India, almost inaccessible in 1857, were brought within three weeks of the capital of the British Empire by the opening of the twentieth century. Before the opening of the World War, Australia, in the heart of the antipodes, had been brought within 30 days' time from London, and a voyage of similar length would compass the distance to Shanghai.

Neither the overland route nor that by way of the Cape of Good Hope was immediately thrown into the discard by the inauguration of the Suez Canal in November, 1869. The canal of 1869 was a far different channel from the commodious waterway of later years. Being exceedingly narrow and of doubtful depth as well as costly to use, it did not commend itself instantly to all shipping concerns and steam packet companies. It did, however, afford an uninterrupted voyage between West and East. This alone would have brought about extensive changes in transportation methods and policies within a few years. But the fact that the opening of the canal synchronized with the general adoption of the compound marine engine in place of the low pressure engines previously in use conspired to effect a veritable revolution in shipping circles.

The rapid changes of the old order involved in this revolution naturally produced some difficult stresses. Vessels adapted for rapid and efficient service in European waters, where distances were not great, were of no use on the much longer lines of the East. Vessels constructed for mail and passenger service in

⁶⁹ *The P. & O. Pocket Book* (3d Issue), p. 13. The canal, because of its inadequate size and lack of facilities in other respects, was not a very good business proposition for a number of years after it was opened.

eastern waters were unable to maintain the faster speeds demanded in the Mediterranean, and were frequently so constructed that they were unable safely to navigate the canal, where extreme manœuvrability was required. At the same time the increased speed and economy gained by the use of new types of propelling machinery made entire fleets of fine vessels obsolescent almost in a day.

These reasons added to the requirements of a newly industrialized world made necessary the employment of new types of vessels by all concerns intent on survival, vessels mechanically modern and constructed with an eye to the limitations of the canal. The companies already operating vessels on both sides of the Isthmus of Suez were particularly hard hit by these developments. Not only were they compelled to scrap large portions of their fleets, in which enormous sums of money were invested, but at the same moment they had to contend with hosts of new competitors. The canal ended all that was left of the exclusiveness of the East, and the retirement of much of the costly equipment of the older and more successful companies made possible mercantile competition on a new basis. Recognizing this, companies which had not possessed the capital or the experience to create two services in order to carry their operations into the East, now hastened to establish new lines in eastern waters.⁷⁰

For a time it seemed that the P. and O. might pass from the scene altogether. Profits vanished. Mail contracts militated against a rapid adaptation to new circumstances. A new building program had to be undertaken without delay at a time when ship-building concerns were swamped with orders. But by 1875 the crisis was passed with the Company still in a leading position. By that time the Suez Canal was regularly being used by the Company's vessels, although the service through Egypt was still being operated for both mails and passengers. A few years more and it began to appear that the trials of the years immediately following 1869 had been blessings in disguise. With the construction of large and powerful steel ships, faster schedules were maintained with ease and operating costs were at the same time reduced.⁷¹

Of other steam navigation companies maintaining eastern communications, the British India Company was most affected by the canal and the accompanying mechanical evolution. One of the vessels of this Company, the *India*, on her way home for new

⁷⁰ See the *London Times*, 7 Jan., 1870.

⁷¹ *The P. & O. Pocket Book* (3d Issue), p. 20. By 1900 eastern freight rates were only one-fifth as high as before the opening of the canal.

boilers and machinery, was the first ship to reach England by way of the canal carrying an Indian cargo. Other vessels of the Company were refitted in quick succession and new and larger ones were built, enabling the concern to weather the unprecedented ordeal. To offset the financial stress, a new opportunity arose. From Bombay, Kurrachee, and the Persian Gulf the Company's lines were extended on to London by way of Red Sea ports, stops being made at Portugal for the conveyance of mails to and from Portuguese East Africa.⁷² In 1876 a line of vessels from Calcutta, Madras, and Colombo to the Tilbury Docks, London, was inaugurated, and from this main trunk line several branches extended. In 1881 a monthly line from London to Brisbane, Australia, *via* the old Torres Straits route, was put into operation under the auspices of the Queensland colonial government, and became the longest mail route operated up to that time.⁷³

The later history of both of these pioneering concerns is closely connected with the work of Lord Inchcape, who succeeded Sir Thomas Sutherland as Chairman of the Peninsular and Oriental Company in 1914.⁷⁴ Due largely to his efforts these and various other navigation companies were built into a great transportation system. Successive alliances have produced a single traffic system which touches every considerable port of the British Empire, and provides three distinct world-encircling main routes embracing India, China, Australia, New Zealand, and the Americas, connecting with most of the by-ways of travel and commerce throughout the globe.⁷⁵

Of the other large shipping companies to make extensive use of the Suez Canal, the Orient Line merits notice. This line was inaugurated in 1877 to supply deficiencies in the Australian communications. Postal subsidies were granted by the colonial governments of New South Wales and South Australia. In 1880

⁷² *Parl. Pap.*, 1873, No. 62.

⁷³ *The Blue Peter*, I, 68-70; William Campbell, "Postal Communication with the East; India in Six, and Australia in Sixteen Days," in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, XIV, 222-246.

⁷⁴ Mr. James Lyle Mackay, who became Lord Inchcape, set up in business in Calcutta in 1874. His mercantile operations prospered, and he lived to construct the most remarkable communication system the world has seen, including practically all of the British steam lines in the East, as well as the Eastern Telegraph Lines, themselves of composite growth.

⁷⁵ *The Blue Peter*, I, 46. See *ibid.*, I, 69-70; Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, *Report of the Proceedings at the Eighty-first Ordinary General Meeting of the Proprietors* (7 Dec., 1921), pp. 11 ff. Within the year ending in December, 1921, the commissioned vessels of the Peninsular and Oriental system totalled 444. They traversed over 15,000,000 nautical miles and carried 13,237,000 tons of cargo and 2,111,564 passengers without a casualty. This year, moreover, was an exceedingly difficult one in shipping circles.

the mail service was placed on a fortnightly basis, in addition to which steamers were run at irregular intervals by way of the Cape for goods and passengers. During the hot season of the year the regular mail steamers in going out from England employed the Cape route in preference to the canal and the Red Sea, though later the Cape route was discontinued entirely for passenger service.⁷⁶

These, with other British lines employing the Cape route and connecting at the Isthmus of Panama or across the continent of North America with Pacific Ocean lines, greatly elaborated on the original comprehensive plan of communication with the East.⁷⁷ In this expansion, British corporations were supplemented and duplicated by numerous steam lines representing continental capital before the Suez Canal was ten years old. The fact that competition is the handmaid of progress was amply manifested by the rapidity with which mechanical improvements were adopted by all eastern lines, by the readiness with which branch lines and "feeders" were laid out to all parts of the eastern hemisphere, in the successive enlargements of the Suez Canal, and in constantly improving time schedules due to vast improvements in building and propelling steamships.⁷⁸

As early as 1843, the effects of the opening of the overland route impelled the Editor of the *Calcutta Review* to observe, that —

If we regard life merely as a space of time within which a certain number of things may be done or suffered . . . , it is obvious that the acceleration and multiplication of those operations in which we are agents or patients, may, in a sense, be said to lengthen life. If the facilities of communication between remote countries are so increased that their intercourse, which required twelve months, can be performed in two, six times as much can be done of those things which depended upon that intercourse; the merchant can transact six times as much business; the statesman can accomplish six times as much good; the philosopher can derive six times as much knowledge; the traveller see six times as much of the world; and all classes, whose enjoyment is connected with the rapidity of communication between places . . . will find their happiness augmented in the same ratio. This is to

⁷⁶ W. J. Loftie, *The Orient Line Guide*. . . (New ed., London, 1885), pp. xvii, 1-2, 59-71.

⁷⁷ See W. S. Lindsay, *History of British Merchant Shipping* (4 vols., London, 1876), IV, 613-619.

⁷⁸ Frederick Talbot, *The Steamship Conquest of the World* (London, 1912).

make the space assigned to human life the measure of a greater number of acts and of gratifications than formerly, and what is this but a virtual increase of that space? ⁷⁹

Yet in 1843 the material reduction of time-distances had barely begun. In relative terms, the span of human life has become almost infinitely longer, now that information is sent to and from all parts of the East by telegraph and cable in as many minutes, and small quantities of goods may be shipped by air in as many days, as weeks were then required. It does not appear that this has made for greater leisure; it has led, rather, to a vastly increased intensity in living and a vastly increased complexity in economic, political, and social relationships. India, for example, has undergone many revolutionary changes in consequence of a closer approach to Europe, and is now not too far away to be represented at Imperial Conferences in London each year.⁸⁰ The future status of India and its place in the British imperial system will be determined, directly or indirectly, more by routes and methods of communication than by any other factors.

⁷⁹ *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., I, 561.

⁸⁰ See *Parl. Pap.*, 1921, No. [C. 1474], "Conference of Prime Ministers and Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions, and India, held in June, July, and August, 1921. Summary of Proceedings and Documents," p. 67.

CHAPTER XVII

REVIVAL OF PROJECTS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

THE FAILURE of the Euphrates Expedition of the years 1834-1837 to disclose an easily navigable channel from a point near the Syrian coast to the Persian Gulf and Palmerston's desertion of the Euphrates Valley Railway scheme in 1857 blocked the construction of an alternative route to India during the lifetime of the East India Company. However, the reports which had been made from time to time on the advantages of developing a channel of communication through Mesopotamia had almost invariably laid stress on the commercial opportunities of the region, and it was this prospect, coupled with the more or less constant political and strategic value of any such line, that again prompted serious reconsideration of a road through the Euphrates Valley. The later projects for Mesopotamian railways were so closely related to economic potentialities that a résumé of the commercial opening of the region by an English firm will be worth while.

The first English merchant to set up in business at the *entrepôt* of Bagdad in the nineteenth century seems to have been one Alexander Hector, who began his endeavor in 1832.¹ For several years he traded in Mesopotamia and operated sailing vessels between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf with little or no outside competition. When Chesney's Euphrates Expedition arrived at Bagdad, Hector received the members cordially and made himself serviceable in a number of ways. Yet, it was this same expedition which disclosed the resources of the region and brought a large degree of "friendly rivalry" to this pioneer merchant.

The beginning of a more extensive commercial development was due to the extraordinary foresight and business acumen of several members of the Lynch family, whose name is still prominent in the commercial annals of Mesopotamia. Upon the break-up of Chesney's expedition at Bagdad in 1837, Lieut. Henry Blosse Lynch, who had been second in command, was placed in

¹ See *Dublin University Magazine*, XVIII, 574.

charge of supplementary surveys by the Bombay Government. As commander of a small flotilla of steam gunboats, Lynch had frequent occasion to navigate the Tigris River between Basrah and Bagdad.² While engaged in this work his first impressions concerning the commercial possibilities of the Tigris basin were confirmed, and at his suggestion one of his brothers, Mr. Thomas Kerr Lynch, joined presently by other members of the family, established a commercial house in Bagdad in 1831.³

The venture prospered from the outset and prospects for large scale development became so favorable that the firm of Lynch Brothers gradually undertook a program of expansion. A few years later, finding that the Bombay Government was contemplating withdrawing their steamers from the navigation of the Tigris River, the Lynch Brothers offered to assume a certain responsibility for the political situation along the Tigris and to take over the steam navigation of the river for commercial purposes. The India authorities were pleased to acquiesce in this arrangement. The Lynch firm thereupon began the operation of the old *Euphrates* and another steamer which had been brought out in sections from England to replace the *Tigris*, lost in 1836.⁴ Although this steam equipment was far from efficient, it sufficed for several years until the firm of Lynch Brothers became widely known throughout the Middle East. The British authorities gave such encouragement as was needed to this strategically located enterprise, and in 1860 sanctioned the formation by Messrs. Lynch of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company.⁵ Not many years afterward the decrepit steamers of the Indian Navy operated by the Company were withdrawn from the Tigris altogether, and two new steam vessels, especially designed for the purpose of carrying goods between Bagdad and Basrah, were brought out from England, by way of the newly opened Suez Canal.

The substitution of these privately owned steamers for those of the Indian Navy was carried out only after some political manœuvring at Constantinople. The original *firman* under which steam service had thus far been maintained on the Tigris

² Sir Henry Layard, *Early Adventures in Persia, Susiana, and Babylonia* . . . , II, 178, 180, 213-216.

³ W. P. Andrew, *A Letter to Viscount Palmerston on the Political Importance of the Euphrates Valley Railway* . . . , p. 60.

⁴ David Fraser, *The Short Cut to India; The Record of a Journey along the Route of the Baghdad Railway* . . . (Edinburgh and London, 1909), pp. 254-255; A. H. Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, I, 329. The old *Euphrates* went down in a gale in the Persian Gulf some years later.

⁵ The firm of Lynch Brothers thereafter acted as agents for the navigation company. — *Geographical Journal*, XLI, 246.

had been made out in 1834 for the purpose of permitting the English Government to operate two steamers on the Euphrates for commercial purposes in connection with the Euphrates Expedition.⁶ This *firman*, while intended to apply specifically to the Euphrates River, had been loosely worded, and the Turkish authorities had tacitly permitted the application of its provisions to the Tigris River. The suggestion of British authorities that the privileges contained in the permit of 1834 be transferred to a business corporation produced some objection at first, due to the envy of the Turkish authorities at Bagdad, who had been watching with considerable apprehension the rapid rise to affluence of Messrs. Lynch. Unwilling to permit a good opportunity to escape, the Pasha of Bagdad determined on building his own fleet of steam vessels for plying on the Tigris and, possibly, the Euphrates as well. When his first vessel, the *Baghdad*, was ready, the Pasha applied to the East India Company for the temporary loan of the services of Capt. A. C. Holland, who had commanded the Company's steamer *Comet* in Persian Gulf waters.⁷ The petition was honored, and Capt. Holland took command of the first Turkish steamer on the Tigris. The venture was badly managed from the beginning, however, the Turks having neither the requisite mechanical qualities nor business experience, and the steamer was removed from service.⁸ With the collapse of this project Turkish objections to the grant of commercial navigation rights to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co. were largely removed, and the application of a bit of oil to the wheels of diplomacy at the Porte by Sir Henry Rawlinson produced the desired result.

The authorization of the transfer of commercial privileges to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co. was embodied in a Vizirial Letter dated January 15, 1861, addressed to the Governor-General of Bagdad. This document followed its prototypes of 1834 and 1842 in being loosely constructed, but since it served as a warrant for the navigation of the Tigris thereafter, its contents are of some interest:⁹

⁶ See *Hertslet's Commercial Treaties*, XIII, 838-839.

⁷ S. H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford, 1925), p. 293. The *Comet* had replaced the earlier and smaller *Nitocris* in the Persian Gulf. A second Turkish steamer, the *Basrah*, constructed, like the *Baghdad*, in Antwerp, appeared on the Tigris later, but was also retired soon afterward.

⁸ Lady Anne Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (New York, 1879), p. 443; Sir E. A. W. Budge, *By Nile and Tigris* (2 vols., London, 1920), I, 213, 214. Capt. Holland had been an officer in the Indian Navy as early as 1832, at the age of twenty. Subsequently he took part in some of the surveying expeditions on the Karun River, he played an honorable part in the Persian campaign of 1845, and in 1861 he was retired from active service.

⁹ W. H. Hall (Ed.), *Reconstruction in Turkey* (New York, 1918), pp. 86-87.

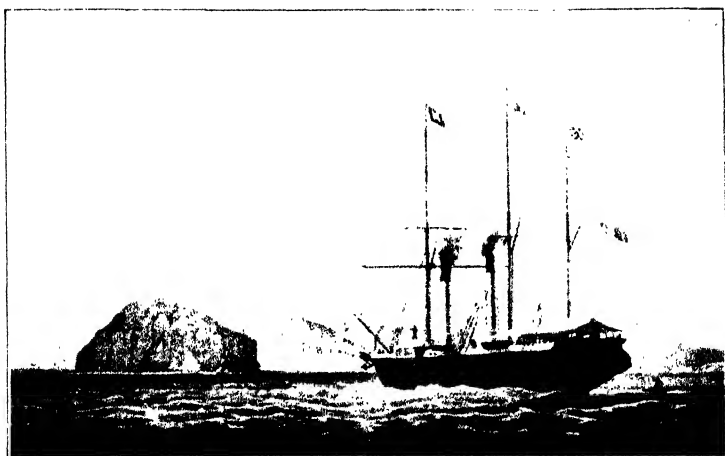
The British Embassy having recently made certain communications for the purpose of obtaining a renewal of the orders which were sent concerning the British steamers and boats authorised by Her Majesty to ply on the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates, it has appeared from the register that permission having on a former occasion been applied for by it to station two steamers on the River Euphrates by Bagdad, and to run them by turns, for the purpose of facilitating trade, two Firmans, dated respectively the end of Shaban, 1250 (1834), and the beginning of Redgeb, 1257 (1842), were addressed to the late Governor-General of Bagdad, Ali Riza Pasha, authorising the permanent station of two steamers on that river, providing it were proved and established that the advantages resulting therefrom would be mutual, and that no sort of inconvenience would ensue therefrom. Further, that in virtue of a report received respecting the dues payable by vessels and boats navigating the Euphrates and Tigris, and in conformity with the request of the British Embassy for Vizirial instructions, on the ground that British merchant vessels might trade in those two rivers after payment of the fixed dues according to Treaty, and considering that the transport of goods from one point to another on those two rivers, without going out to sea, is in fact internal trade, and that under such circumstances vessels, under whatsoever flag it may be, must pay the same dues as Ottoman vessels or boats. . . . For these reasons on the 6th Rebiul-akhir, 1262 (1846),¹⁰ instructions were sent to Bagdad directing, as above, that these same dues should be levied on British merchant vessels engaged in internal trade as on boats belonging to Ottoman subjects. . . .¹¹

This gave a practical monopoly of navigation rights to the Lynch firm, who made use of their position to develop a very profitable traffic both in goods and passengers between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf, charging such rates as the traffic would bear. The advent of the *City of London* and her sister vessel, the *Dajlah*, brought a new era of prosperity to Bagdad and Basrah. Commander Lynch wrote in 1868 that "the trade between India, England, and the ports of the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates has increased in an extraordinary degree since the expedition first drew attention to these countries. . . . Many of the European nations are now represented by mercantile firms at Bagdad."¹²

¹⁰ *Hertslet's Com. Treat.*, XIII, 839.

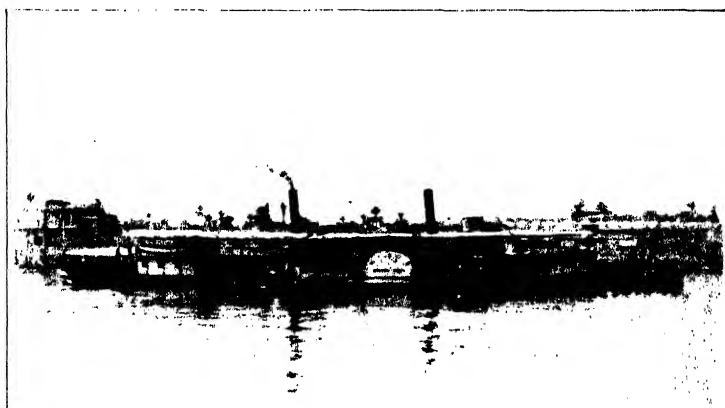
¹¹ *Ibid.*, XIII, 845, 846.

¹² F. R. Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, p. 357. See Richard Coke, *Baghdad; the City of Peace*, p. 272.



From a print in the possession of Messrs. Thos. H. Parker, London

The *Bentinck* at Aden in January 1844



The *Blossie Lough* at Bagdad about 1877

Previously the Tigris trade had been confined to vessels of only twenty to fifty tons burden. These boats required from six to eight days to make the journey down stream and from forty to sixty days to complete the ascent against the swift current. In contrast with this performance the new steamers were able to cover the five hundred miles between Bagdad and the Gulf in a matter of fifty-two to sixty hours, and the return was usually accomplished in four or five days.¹³

Throughout its history, the path of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company was constantly beset with many difficulties which required unusual tact and patience to surmount. The Turkish authorities at Bagdad were at all times careful to keep the Company's efforts within the narrowest interpretations of their concession, restricting normal expansion as the Tigris trade developed. The Company were forbidden to employ their vessels above Bagdad, or to have in commission more than two steamers, which were not to be used simultaneously, regardless of passenger and freight needs. Objections were frequently raised against the concession itself.¹⁴

Much of this opposition is to be explained by the revival in 1867 of the Turkish steam service and its organization as the Uman-Ottoman Administration. To the earlier and almost obsolete Turkish vessels were added three new and modern steamers in 1867, the *Mosul*, *Frat*, and *Rasafa*,¹⁵ and under the enterprising Midhat Pasha frequent sailings were made regardless of the amount of business carried on. While these vessels were under no such limitations as those imposed on the Lynch steamers and charged even lower rates, the latter suffered relatively little because of the high standard of service, regular schedules, and business principles on which they were operated. In 1875 the Lynch Company, through diplomatic action at the Porte, were allowed to add a third steamer to their Tigris equipment to act as a reserve to the two others then in service, but the bringing out of the *Mejidieh* in 1883 under this arrangement brought relations between Company and local government to an *impasse*, which was with difficulty straightened out through the usual diplomatic channels.¹⁶

In 1904 the Turkish steam service was again reorganized and renamed the "Hamidieh" in honor of the Sultan. For some

¹³ Budge, *op. cit.*, I, 214.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 215; Layard, *Autobiography*, I, 331 n.

¹⁵ Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 318; Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 255. The *Blosse Lynch* had been brought out in 1876 to replace the *Daylah* which had been sunk.

years it was fairly well conducted, and it even managed to capture a modicum of the Tigris trade. With the Young Turk rising, however, its control again deteriorated, and until the opening of the Great War it carried on at best a precarious existence. The Lynch enterprise meanwhile had run into new difficulties with the German Bagdad Railway enterprise. A series of infringements on the Lynch concession was followed in March, 1914, by the merging of the Lynch interests with those of Lord Inchcape, who already controlled the Peninsular and Oriental, British India, and other steam navigation and industrial enterprises in the East.¹⁷

In other lines than the Tigris trade Messrs. Lynch were instrumental in developing the economic resources of the Middle East during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In order to feed their Tigris line, they opened up roads into Persia, placed steamers on the Karun which were sometimes operated at a loss, built bridges, and developed caravan routes.¹⁸ It was perfectly natural, therefore, that the Lynch firm should be deeply interested from the first in the development of their interests by establishing better connections with the Mediterranean on the one hand and India on the other, either by added steamship facilities or land lines of railway, and that their success should exercise some influence in Government circles.

While the British Government refused to take any official action in 1857 toward opening the Euphrates Valley route by means of a railway, interest continued in some quarters. There was some talk, for instance, of building a Jaffa to Jerusalem railway for the commercial opening of Syria, with the object of extending a branch of the road subsequently to the Persian Gulf. In 1862 a group of promoters, headed by Sir Moses Montefiore, issued a prospectus for such a road,¹⁹ and Capt. H. B. Lynch, who had just returned from Bagdad to push the proposition of a rail-

¹⁷ E. M. Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway* (New York, 1923), pp. 190-191, 258-260, *et passim*; *Geographical Journal*, XLI, 246-248; Coke, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-285. In 1912 the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company maintained three steamers on the Euphrates River as operating agents of the *Société de Transport Fluviaux en Orient*, and motor boats were used to supplement these. During the War one of the Company's vessels, the *Shushan*, maintained a kind of service on the river, but navigation on any extensive scale is still impracticable.

¹⁸ Sykes, *History of Persia*, II, 371-372, 528-530; Curzon, *op. cit.*, II, 332-334; Chirol, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-164; P. M. Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia* (London, 1902), pp. 245-246, 250; *Geog. Journal*, XLI, 247-248. The opening of the Karun River was quite an accomplishment in itself, and was carried out in the teeth of French and Russian opposition.

¹⁹ Lane-Poole, *Life of General F. R. Chesney*, pp. 448, 453-460; *London Times*, 14 Sept., 1882.

way from the Mediterranean to the Tigris, became interested in this. The reorganized Euphrates Valley Railway Company, however, with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe as Chairman of the Board of Directors, entered the diplomatic field first. While this Company attempted to make capital at home of the prevailing hostility to the French Suez Canal enterprise, Chesney was sent out to Constantinople to secure a right-of-way from the Turks. Before the end of June, with the aid of Sir Henry Bulwer, he had secured concessions for the construction of a portion of the line. At this stage the project was submitted to the British Government for approval. It found many well wishers in official circles, but it failed to enlist the sympathy of Gladstone and other members of the Ministry, and without the moral, if not financial, support of Government, nothing could be accomplished.²⁰ The Euphrates Valley group thereupon suspended their plans. Lord Stratford made capital of severing all of his connections with the concern, and public interest quickly subsided. The Lynch firm were exasperated to the point of throwing aside patriotic considerations for the time being in order to seek in French enterprise and capital a resource lacking in England. Even in this they were disappointed.

A few years later, the pomp and circumstance connected with the official opening of the Suez Canal under French auspices added to several disturbing factors in French international relations, again drew attention to the need for a route to India not under French control. France had acquired a strategic foothold in Somaliland in 1864, which, with the Suez Canal, placed her in a strong position with regard to the control of the Red Sea. Moreover, as a counterpoise to British India, France had been busily extending her possessions in Indo-China. Even in European circles the omens were not good. Napoleon III had ignored English attitude in persisting in his conquest of Mexico, and had introduced a dangerous tone into the affairs of the western nations by insisting on "compensation" for his neutrality during the Austro-Prussian War. An alternative route to India was no longer merely a subject for theorizing by British merchants or super-imperialists.

One small but significant indication that the British Government was taking the situation to heart was the authorization in 1868 of the publication of Chesney's *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition carried on by order of the British Government during the years 1835, 1836, and 1837*. "It is thought advisable by Her

²⁰ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 460. A railway line in Syria would have been more distasteful to the French than the Euphrates Valley project first proposed because of the traditional connection of France with the Syrian Christians.

Majesty's Government," Chesney said at the beginning of the work, "having regard to the greatly increased importance of the Overland Route question,²¹ that it would be for the public advantage that the materials of information remaining in my hands should be rendered accessible, and I have received their commands to proceed with the present work."²² The press also took up the question again,²³ and proceeded with greater vigor than at any previous time to argue, in substance, that "a commercial nation ought not to repine at the opening of any new highway of commerce; but a nation administering a distant empire, cannot afford to trust her communications to the chances of commercial equality, which at any time may be disturbed by national or dynastic rivalries. . ."²⁴ During the summer of 1870 a number of surveys for possible railway lines were carried on in the mountains of the Syrian hinterland, and these furnished something of a practical working basis for governmental consideration of lines from the eastern shore of the Mediterranean through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf.²⁵

The next summer the question of opening a Euphrates Valley route to India was brought up in the House of Commons. Following a debate, a Select Committee of the House was appointed on July 4 "to examine and Report upon the whole subject of Railway Communication between the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Persian Gulf."²⁶ This Committee took up the subject committed to them with a will and began the collection of evidence as to the practicability of a railway through the Euphrates Valley. Witnesses were summoned whose experience with the region dated back to the first explorations. Among these, naturally, was the now aged General Chesney, whose hopes again rose high of seeing his long-cherished project consummated during his lifetime. Called before the Committee at its first public sitting on July 17, he reviewed much of the history of the surveys which he had carried out forty years before and reiterated his belief in the Euphrates Valley line.²⁷ This was one of the last

²¹ This is one of the earliest applications of the term "overland" to the route through Mesopotamia after the Suez Canal became a reality.

²² (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1868), p. 2.

²³ *London Times*, 7 June, 1870.

²⁴ Chesney, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 386, p. 61.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1871, No. 386, pp. ii, 36-37; W. P. Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Route to India* (London, 1873), p. 50.

²⁷ William Andrew was examined by the Committee on the same date, but his interest in the development of a railway line which might connect with Indian railways which he had developed gave less weight to his evidence than to that of Chesney, who knew the ground thoroughly.

efforts made by this staunch pioneer in the cause to which he was so devoted, and death, which came before the end of the Parliamentary investigation, spared him the bitter disappointment of seeing the project again defeated.²⁸

The Select Committee of 1870 did not complete its labors during the session, and only a preliminary report was handed in on July 27.²⁹ It was reappointed on February 19, 1872, to complete the investigation. During the next few months the geographical, political, and financial aspects of the various possible railway lines leading from European shores to the Persian Gulf were examined in full. Twenty-eight witnesses gave evidence before the Committee, and a great deal of additional information was collected by addressing lists of queries to the British Consular officers stationed in various parts of Asiatic Turkey.³⁰ In all of this evidence no note of doubt could be detected concerning the feasibility or even the necessity of a railway line utilizing one of the various overland routes proposed, but there was the greatest difference of opinion as to which line was best adapted to serve the political and commercial purposes of Great Britain.

Chesney, Sir William Andrew, Telford MacNeill,³¹ William Ainsworth, and others, generally those who had been connected in some way with earlier projects for opening up the Euphrates Valley, very strongly supported that route still.³² It was urged that this was the most direct and the cheapest route that could be found and the most easily defended, with one of its termini at Alexandretta or Suedia (Seleucia) on the Mediterranean and the other at Koweit (Grane) on the western side of the Persian Gulf. The case for this line represented the ideas of a considerable group of British imperialists, some of whom still continue to ad-

²⁸ An excellent biographical sketch is contained in the *Annual Register*, 1872, Pt. II, p. 136. Chesney's career was particularly striking and full of misfortune. His domestic life was especially unhappy, which he tried to forget in active, adventurous service. He was a very ambitious man, fretting much because of slow promotion, which he was too proud to overcome by the usual means. As an officer he was respected by his subordinates, though he proved to be a severe superior, exacting strictest discipline at all times, and expecting those under him to equal his unusual energy. He devoted most of his life to the realization of his dream to protect British possessions in the East through the opening and control of the direct route which he first surveyed.

²⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1871, No. 386.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1872, No. [C. 534]. The report from Syria of Vice-Consul E. B. B. Barker, son of John Barker, who had once been stationed in the same region, is of particular interest (pp. 8-12).

³¹ An engineer, son of Sir John McNeill, who had helped survey a route from Antioch through the mountains in 1856.

³² See the article by D. Simon Fraser in *Ocean Highways: The Geographical Record*, II, p. 137.

vocate the development of this route.⁸³ It was stated by Andrew thus:

It is not on commercial consideration that I would urge the claims of the Euphrates Valley Railway. It is on imperial grounds that the scheme commends itself to our support. I believe that the establishment of the Euphrates route would add incalculably to our prestige throughout Europe and the East, and would do more to strengthen our hold on India than any other means that could be devised. It is designed to ultimately form [*sic*] a through line from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf, and is capable of being extended eastward to India. It would always be independent of any European disturbances, and would constitute the only portion of a through line of railway which would be always, and under all circumstances, at the absolute control of this country.⁸⁴

Most of the authorities consulted agreed that roads starting from Black Sea ports, which had been suggested as a means of offsetting Russian railways,⁸⁵ should be avoided, not only because of great engineering difficulties but also because of the danger of being cut off at the Straits in time of war. Such a route could hardly serve imperial purposes if it failed to provide a line by which troops and munitions could be transported in times of emergency.⁸⁶ But other routes were taken under serious consideration which would, when completed, provide railways direct from Europe to India. Such lines starting from the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor or from a point opposite Constantinople and passing through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, might be carried on to Kurrachee. It was proposed to link these trunk lines by means of branch railways with the Black Sea on the one hand and the Syrian coast on the other, thus combining the salient features of the other proposed routes in one possessing the advantages of all.⁸⁷ Turkish authorities did all in their power to lend weight to projects for lines starting near Constantinople,

⁸³ See *The Near East*, XIV, 871.

⁸⁴ W. P. Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Railway: a Lecture* (London, 1882); F. von Löher and Mrs. A. B. Joyner, *Cyprus: Historical and Descriptive* (New York, 1878), pp. 291-292.

⁸⁵ W. P. Andrew, *India and Her Neighbours* (London, 1878), p. 375; Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Route to India; a Paper read before the British Association in Brighton, in August, 1872* . . . (London, 1873), pp. 26 ff.

⁸⁶ Colburn's: *The New Monthly Magazine*, CXLIX, 611 ff.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, CLI, 201 ff.

even intimating that no concessions would be given for lines which failed to open up Asia Minor.³⁸ It was also freely suggested during Committee sessions that in normal times England should utilize the continental railways of Europe from Calais to Constantinople as soon as they were completed, thus duplicating for travel and transportation the arrangement already in use for telegraphic communication.³⁹ The idea of a Bagdad Railway, extending to the Persian Gulf or all of the way to India, was slowly but surely evolving. Other Powers of Europe were not slow to comprehend the advantages in such a line.

The Parliamentary Committee reported on July 22, 1872, stating that it had to recommend for immediate utilization only lines starting from the Mediterranean and reaching some point on the Persian Gulf. As to termini, the Committee preferred Alexandretta on the Mediterranean and Grane on the Persian Gulf. The maximum cost of a railway of average gauge between these points was estimated at £10,000,000, and the saving in time for troops and passengers between London and Bombay was placed at more than ninety hours.⁴⁰

In presenting their final report and urging action, the Committee affirmed that —

It would be of vast importance to the interests of this country and of India that some alternative route, such as the one now proposed, should be created by means of a railway between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf; and further, your Committee recommend . . . that the construction of an alternative route . . . should be assisted financially by a joint guarantee of the Imperial and Indian Governments. The utmost liability that could fall on England under this arrangement would be £300,000 per annum; but this is supposing the Turkish Government to fail entirely to pay anything, or the Railway either; and that is a con-

³⁸ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 633; Colburn's, CLI, p. 227. See Correspondence quoted in Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Railway: A Lecture*, p. 84; and the statement of Capt. the Hon. Randolph Stewart at the Royal United Service Institution, May 23, 1873, in W. P. Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Route to India, in connection with the Central Asian Question* (London, 1873), p. 24. The Turkish Government was reported to be considering constructing a railway of its own through Asia Minor. *Parl. Pap.*, 1872, No. [C. 534], p. 14.

³⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1872, No. 386, pp. 4-5, 15 ff.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 322, pp. ii-xix; *ibid.*, No. [C. 534], pp. 6-8. One of the advantages claimed for the Euphrates Valley route after all the surveys of the past forty years had shown the Euphrates River to be only partially navigable was that the railway could be supplemented while it was in building by steam vessels operated on that river.

tingency almost too remote to be treated as a liability, or certainly as a probability.⁴¹

But instead of putting forth a single definite line from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, the Committee fatally weakened its report by presenting several alternatives, each of which possessed its own peculiar advantages. The inference was, naturally, that further surveys and other investigations would be necessary before the best line could be selected, and the whole subject remained in a more or less hypothetical state.⁴²

Five lines were suggested as practicable. There was, first, the line starting from Alexandretta or Suedia, near the mouth of the Orontes, passing through Aleppo to the Euphrates at or near Jiaber Castle, and passing thence down the right bank of the river to Koweit (Grane), which was looked upon as a better terminus than Basrah.⁴³ In the second place, a line was proposed starting from one of the same points, crossing the Euphrates River at Beles, passing thence down the left bank of that river or the right bank of the Tigris, to a point nearly opposite Bagdad, to admit of a branch line to that city, then re-crossing the Euphrates and proceeding to Koweit. Third, a line was proposed starting as before, crossing the Euphrates at Bir, proceeding thence to Orfah and Diarbekr, and following the right bank of the Tigris to the Gulf. The fourth suggestion contemplated a similar line, but one following the left bank of the Tigris. The fifth line was described as starting from Tripoli and proceeding across the desert by way of Damascus and Palmyra to the Euphrates, whence it might follow one of the preceding routes.⁴⁴

Government heads took no steps toward acting on the recommendations of the Select Committee. Although there was less in the way of building a railway through Mesopotamia in 1872 than at any previous time, there was also less impulse for immediate action. The Suez Canal was taking care of all normal communication and commercial needs, and while its control remained for the time being in French hands, France had been removed as a rival and source of danger for an indefinite length of time as a result of the Franco-German War. Britain had also secured some representation on the controlling Board of the Suez Canal Com-

⁴¹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1872, No. 322, Report. See Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 632.

⁴² This was pointed out by Earl Granville during a debate in the House of Lords on 26 July, 1882.

⁴³ *Parl. Pap.*, 1872, No. [C. 534], pp. 8-12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 322, Report; Löher and Joyner, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.

pany, and the likelihood that shipping passing through the canal would be molested in any way appeared to be very remote. Besides these considerations, Great Britain had not yet come to realize that inevitably, sooner or later, direct political responsibility would have to be assumed for the territories through which lay actual and potential highways to her indispensable eastern possessions. The old attitude of political aloofness was still being cherished.⁴⁵ The carrying out of a Euphrates Valley railway enterprise was allowed to wait, therefore, as long as the political situation in Europe appeared to be satisfactory.

Changes meanwhile were quietly taking place which made the carrying out of plans for a railway from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf under British auspices a very doubtful matter at any time in future. British relations with the Porte, which for many years had been very close and generally very cordial, were slowly but definitely becoming less friendly. One after another, those Turkish officials who had long relied on English guidance were removed through death or political reverses. Djemal Pasha, the able Minister of Foreign Affairs and a consistent Anglophile, died in September, 1872. The Grand Vizier, Mahmud Pasha, who had not been averse from English influence at the Porte, fell into disgrace about the same time and was forced to resign. His place was taken by Midhat Pasha, Governor of the Bagdad pashalik, who had consistently opposed British objects and interests in Mesopotamia for a number of years. The appointment of Rudschi Pasha in his place as Grand Vizier soon afterward was no gain for England.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Turkish susceptibilities were gravely hurt when, in connection with the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876, Gladstone began his denunciation of the "unspeakable Turk" in the House of Commons, and wished that the Ottoman Government could be ousted from Europe, "bag and baggage."⁴⁷

This loss of favor at Constantinople was not readily appreciated in England. For several years following the report of the Select Committee in 1872 it was assumed that the Euphrates Valley Railway, when attempted, would receive the hearty support of the Sultan's Government. But while England procrastinated and neglected Turkish attitude, other states were becoming more active in eastern affairs. Between 1865 and 1871, French, German, and Austrian syndicates had been authorized to construct

⁴⁵ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

⁴⁶ *Annual Register*, 1872, Pt. I, 283.

⁴⁷ See *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXXX, 1741-1748; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

railway lines in Turkey and Persia.⁴⁸ These came to nothing because of insufficient capital and the inability of the Turkish Government to give suitable financial guarantees. Other companies, however, were constantly appearing on the scene after 1870. A French railway was begun between Brusa and its port, Mudania, in 1873, although the work was not completed until 1892.⁴⁹ About the same time the opening of the Suez Canal brought about an invasion of Indian and eastern ports by new European steamship companies, which had been practically excluded from the use of the Red Sea as British interests controlled the overland route through Egypt. A strong French company, the *Messageries Maritimes*, opened a line to Calcutta and the Farther East in 1872, and in 1873 a Russian line of steamers was established to ply between Odessa and Bombay.⁵⁰ These were developments which were scarcely offset by English commercial expansion, such as that represented by the augmented service of the British India Steam Navigation Company in the Persian Gulf in 1872, or the acquisition of the canal shares of the Khedive of Egypt in 1875.

However, the factor which, more than any other, tended to keep up considerable British interest in an alternative route to India for a quarter of a century after the Franco-German War was the spectre of an imperialistic Russia, bent on finding a free outlet to some large body of water to the South. This spectre assumed various shapes and appeared now in the European provinces of Turkey, and again in Mesopotamia or Persia, and at other times in the vicinity of the northwest frontier of India, toward which a Russian railway was building.⁵¹ With France definitely removed as a dangerous rival, the motives and machinations of the "Great Northern Power" occupied still more attention.⁵² Much of the evidence received by the Parliamentary Committee in 1871 and

⁴⁸ Curzon, *op. cit.*, I, 614.

⁴⁹ Morris Jastrow, *The War and the Bagdad Railway* (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 159 n.

⁵⁰ Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Route to India, in connection with the Central Asian Question*, pp. 5, 19-20; *Journal of the East India Association*, X, 246-269.

⁵¹ *Journal of the East India Assn.*, IX, 192. Cf. *ibid.*, VII, 1-24.

⁵² *Ocean Highways: The Geog. Rec.*, II, 137-138. Disraeli is quoted here as having said in a speech at Manchester, "No man can doubt that the entire command of the Black Sea will soon be in the possession of Russia. The time may not be distant when we may hear of the Russian power in the Persian Gulf, and what effect that may have upon the dominions of England, and upon those possessions on the productions of which we every year more and more depend, are questions upon which it will be well on proper occasions to meditate." See also the letter from Col. Sir Henry Green, in Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley Route to India* (1873), pp. 34-37.

1872 was designed to show the necessity of building a railway line through Mesopotamia to prevent Russian access to the Persian Gulf along the same line.⁵³ A paper read before the East India Association in 1877 succinctly summed up the case thus: "The Eastern Question is for England a Russo-Indian question — viz., the securing at any cost the neutrality of Constantinople and the Isthmus of Suez, as they affect the route to India, and our relations with Russia in her position in Asia Minor and on our Indian frontier, where Russia has now become our neighbour."⁵⁴ And a Russian paper was quoted as saying that "India is the Achilles' heel, where England is most vulnerable."⁵⁵

If England was reluctant during these years to exploit one of the approaches to India, there was sufficient willingness to proceed to extreme lengths, if necessary, to protect the Indian frontier. This evidence was shown by the revival of the Afghan question and the outbreak of the Second Afghan War as a means of checking Russia. That Great Northern Power had made great headway since the first war with Afghanistan. In 1868 she had established her control over the Khanate of Bokhara, which brought her to the very borders of Afghanistan. In 1873 the Khanate of Khiva was absorbed, although the Amir had vainly sued for British support but a little earlier. Partially to offset these moves, Lord Lytton, who had been sent out to India as Viceroy upon Disraeli's accession as Premier, proclaimed a protectorate over Baluchistan in 1876 and established an advanced military station at Quetta as a door which might be opened into Afghanistan. This was followed by the making of a secret treaty between Russia and the Amir, Sher Ali, in August, 1878, a few weeks after the announcement of the Cyprus Convention, which practically gave Russia a protectorate in Afghanistan. At the same time, Afghan refusals to receive a British envoy led to the declaration of a costly and ineffectual war in November.⁵⁶

The war had some redeeming features, however. A hostile Amir was replaced by one who, if not friendly to British influences, was no less opposed to those of Russia. The war also

⁵³ Andrew, *India and Her Neighbours*, p. 75; *Parl. Pap.*, 1872, No. 322.

⁵⁴ *Journal of the East India Assn.*, X, 246, a paper by Rev. James Long.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, IX, 187.

⁵⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1881, Central Asia, No. 1; *London Times*, 9 Feb., 1881. An Indian Railway to the Bolan Pass to offset the approach of Russian railway lines and to facilitate the movement of Indian troops to the frontier was being advocated about this time, although the first suggestions for such a line had been made years before. — *The Times*, 17 Jan., 1879.

secured control of the mountain wall and secured the defence of India on the northwest. Thereafter, a strategic railway a thousand miles away appeared hardly as essential as it had before. Moreover, the assassination of Tsar Alexander II on March 13, 1881, led to the inauguration of somewhat better relations with his successor, and Anglo-Russian feuds gradually gave place to Anglo-German rivalry.⁵⁷

While British strategists were no longer agreed on the value of a railway through Mesopotamia for the protection of India,⁵⁸ the fear of Russian aims led to the continued contemplation of such a line. Under these circumstances the British world viewed with great alarm the approach of hostilities between Russia and Turkey as the outcome of Balkan revolts, although at the opening of the war the Tsar gave emphatic assurance that he had no designs on Constantinople. It was inevitable that for the time being Great Britain and Turkey should draw closer together, the latter having full confidence that in case of a Russian invasion of Turkish territory Britain would come to the rescue for the sake of her eastern interests as in 1854.⁵⁹

However, British diplomacy did not follow the same lines as on former occasions. On May 6, 1877, Lord Derby despatched to the Russian Ambassador a statement of British interests in the East with regard to Constantinople, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, Egypt, the Suez Canal, and the Persian Gulf. He warned Russia that any attempt to block or interrupt the communications between Europe and the East would be regarded as "a menace to India and would be inconsistent with the maintenance . . . of an attitude of passive neutrality." Likewise it was stated that Great Britain could not endure Russian occupation of Constantinople or Egypt, and a "hands off" policy in the Persian Gulf was defined.⁶⁰ Three weeks later came the Russian reply, agreeing to abide by the demands of the British Government, and the likelihood of another great European war was greatly diminished.⁶¹

Even with this partial understanding on eastern matters, Great Britain was altogether unprepared for the disaster which befell Turkish arms in December, 1877. The subsequent Treaty of

⁵⁷ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CCLIV, 490, 889.

⁵⁸ *Journal of the East India Assn.*, X, 250; W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 68.

⁵⁹ *Fortnightly Review*, XXVII, 119; St. George Freeman, *England's Duty in the Present Crisis* (Dublin, 1877).

⁶⁰ Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, IV, 2615-2617.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 2624-2627; G. C. Thompson, *Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield*, 1875-1880 (2 vols., London, 1886), II, 186.

San Stefano, which reduced European Turkey to a small fragment of its former size and wrested from her important trans-Caucasian territories, while not directly touching any of the regions specifically mentioned in the statement of May 6, 1877, nevertheless so undermined that "inert and friendly Power on the Bosphorus," on which depended the safety of India, that the British Government, which had already gone nearly to the length of declaring war and had brought out some 7000 Indian troops to Malta by way of the Suez Canal,⁶² felt constrained to intervene in the making of final arrangements. On the ground that the Treaty of San Stefano entirely changed the status of Europe as defined by the Powers at Paris in 1856 and must therefore be submitted to another European Congress, Russia protestingly yielded and consented to a review of the Eastern Question at a Congress held in Berlin under the chairmanship of Prince Bismarck.

While the Powers, Great Britain, France, Austria, and Prussia, were drawing up the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, with scant regard for the arrangement made at San Stefano, British authorities, anticipating a settlement which might leave something to be desired in the protection of routes to the East, carried on negotiations at Constantinople on their own account. Various strategic sites in the Eastern Mediterranean had already been considered which might offer a suitable base for operations against Russia in future, and which would afford the requisite protection for the Suez Canal and for any railway which might be constructed from a Syrian port. British policy in this connection was outlined by Lord Salisbury a little later in an official note to the French Government. In it he confessed that —

The advice has been from various quarters repeatedly pressed upon Her Majesty's Government to occupy Egypt, or at least to take the borders of the Suez Canal.⁶³ Such an

⁶² Quite a controversy was aroused, even in British circles, by the transfer of Indian troops by way of the canal to European waters. Aside from the new theory of imperial relationships, implied in the act, it threw much light on Britain's attitude toward the canal itself. — *Journal of the East India Assn.*, XI, 152-183; Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 211, 415-416; *London Times*, 18 April, 1878.

⁶³ The Government was the more influenced to take such a step by the reported discovery by the Egyptian Government in 1877 of a plot to blow in the banks of the Suez Canal with nitroglycerine. The imagined ease with which this route might be completely blocked for a considerable period of time caused grave fears, and has undoubtedly been at the bottom of British policy in Egypt ever since. See An Englishman, *England in Egypt: The Highway to India; A Proposal Submitted to the People of England* (London, 1877), pp. 5-6.

operation might not have been at variance with English interests, and would have presented no material difficulties. But this policy has never been entertained by Her Majesty's Government. We had received an intimation from the French Government that any such proceeding would be very unwelcome to the French people, and we could not but see the reasonableness of their objection under the existing circumstances. Her Majesty's Government have constantly turned a deaf ear to all suggestions of that kind.⁶⁴

The turning of a "deaf ear" to suggestions for occupying Egypt was doubtless partly due to the knowledge that France had real, that is, extensive financial, as well as political, interests in that country. The occupation by Great Britain of a position on the coast of Syria was also decided against because of the certainty of wounding French feelings. As Lord Salisbury said, in continuing his note —

They [the British Government] have been likewise recommended to occupy some port on the coast of Syria, such as Alexandretta, but they felt that, however carefully guarded, such a proceeding might, in the present temper of men's minds, be construed as indicating an intention to acquire territory on the mainland of Western Asia; and they did not care to be suspected of designs which are wholly apart from their thoughts. They have, therefore, preferred to accept from the Sultan the provisional occupation of a position less advantageous, indeed, but still sufficient for the purpose, and not exposed to the inconveniences I have mentioned.⁶⁵

This "less advantageous position" was the island of Cyprus, which was to serve for Britain as a "*point de départ*" and a "*place d'armes*" for controlling and protecting the route to India.

The island of Cyprus had long been spoken of as suited for the terminus of a line of steamers from England and as a base for the projected railway from an eastern Mediterranean port to the Persian Gulf.⁶⁶ The island possessed some fairly extensive har-

⁶⁴ The Marquis of Salisbury to M. Waddington, 7 July, 1878. — *British and Foreign State Papers*, LXIX, 1347.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1347.

⁶⁶ A Dr. J. W. Winchester, an officer in the Company's forces, writing in 1843 on "The Practicability of Advancing an Army from Europe into Asia by the Provinces of the Euphrates and Tigris," said of the various strategic positions which might be acquired to protect the line of the Euphrates, "We consider Cyprus to be the best adapted for that purpose. . . This island's proximity to the mainland eminently adapts it for a depot, from whence troops and their equipage may be

bors, which, it was thought, could readily be fortified and used as naval and commercial bases. It was argued by some that such a position, once in English power, would suffice at once to serve the proposed railway lines and to protect the Suez Canal.⁶⁷

Early in the year 1878 Disraeli had taken pains to discover to his own personal satisfaction whether a Euphrates Valley Railway were really a feasible project by sending out a Capt. Cameron to survey the more difficult sections of the proposed route from a point opposite Cyprus toward Mosul and Bagdad.⁶⁸ Receiving a favorable report on the matter, Disraeli took up the matter of the acquisition of the island at a time when the Turkish Government, exhausted by a disastrous war, was in no position to haggle over terms, and when there was a disposition to look to Britain as a potential savior from the ruinous terms of the San Stefano treaty. The war with Russia came to a close with Russian armies occupying Turkish provinces south of the Caucasus Mountains. This fact more than any other furnishes a clue to the famous Cyprus Convention of June 4, 1878.

The progress of the confidential negotiations which have for some time past been in progress between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Russia [wrote Lord Salisbury to the British Ambassador at the Porte, A. H. Layard, on May 30], makes it probable that those articles of the Treaty of San Stefano which concern European Turkey will be sufficiently modified to bring them into harmony with the other European Powers, and with England in particular.

There is, however, no such prospect with respect to that portion of the Treaty which concerns Turkey in Asia. . . Her Majesty's Government have consequently been forced to consider the effect which these agreements . . . will have upon the future of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire and upon the interests of England, which are closely affected by the condition of those provinces.⁶⁹

transferred to Latakia or Scanderoon (Alexandretta)." — From *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* for 1843, quoted in *Asiatic Journal*, 3d Ser., III, 77-78.

⁶⁷ *Quarterly Review*, CLXVIII, 41; *ibid.*, CCXXVIII, 490; Löher and Joyner, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-281; Hall, *Reconstruction in Turkey*, p. 101.

⁶⁸ *London Times*, 11 July, 1878; *Quarterly Review*, CCXXVIII, 490; W. S. Blunt, *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt* (London, 1907), pp. 67-68.

⁶⁹ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXIX, 1342-1344; Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, IV, 2717-2720. All outstanding causes of difference between Russia and

Even if it became certain, the despatch continued, that Batum, Ardahan, and Kars would not be Russian centres of intrigue and bases from which Russian armies would attempt the invasion of India, the very presence of Russia in such a location would certainly exercise an undermining influence throughout western Asia. Such an effect must be offset by Great Britain in any way possible. The only surety against the disintegration of Asiatic Turkey, Lord Salisbury averred, would be a British position near the coast of Asia Minor and Syria, the Island of Cyprus being most desirable for the purpose. It was not proposed to acquire such a position in absolute ownership, hence, "while the administration and occupation of the Island shall be assigned to Her Majesty, the territory shall continue to be part of the Ottoman Empire." Moreover, when Russia ceased to hold fortresses in Asiatic Turkey, Cyprus would revert entirely to Turkish control.

With this explanatory statement, Layard was instructed by a separate despatch of the same date to secure the Sultan's consent to the proposition that "In order to enable England to make necessary provisions for executing her engagements, the Sultan further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England."⁷⁰ The Turkish Government apparently had little hesitation in giving sanction to this proposal, which practically detached another substantial portion from the Ottoman Empire. All unknown to the other Powers carrying on the negotiations at Berlin, the details of the transaction were embodied in an Anglo-Turkish Convention signed at Constantinople on June 4. This document contained in substance the provisions sent to Ambassador Layard from the British Foreign Office, giving Great Britain all administrative rights in Cyprus and binding Britain to prevent by force of arms any further encroachments by Russia on Turkish territory.⁷¹

The first official information of the arrangement concerning Cyprus was given out on July 7. Lord Salisbury addressed a note to the French Foreign Minister, M. Waddington, then in Berlin, explaining the ostensible motives of the British Govern-

England concerning territories in Asia were compromised by an Anglo-Russian Convention, signed at St. Petersburg, 31 Aug., 1907. (See *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, C, 555-560). However, owing to the extent of German commercial and political penetration into the Asiatic field and to German influences at the Porte, the agreement concerning the return of Cyprus to Turkey was ignored. Following the entry of Turkey into the Great War as an ally of the General Powers, Cyprus was definitely proclaimed a British protectorate.

⁷⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1878, No. [C. 2057], p. 17.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1879, No. [C. 2229], Cyprus No. 1; *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXX, 1276 f.

ment and adding the justification that "The Convention is, as Your Excellency will doubtless have noticed, entirely within the Treaty rights of the two Powers, and therefore it would not, under ordinary circumstances, have been the subject of an official communication."⁷² This information, coming at a time when the labors of the Congress of Berlin were nearing completion, fell like a thunderbolt. There was at first a disposition to review the international aspects of the Convention before the Congress, as the Treaty of San Stefano had been reviewed, but the Powers were finally content to consider the matter *un fait accompli* without dispute. Austria acquired the right to "occupy and administer" the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prussia was not then interested in the acquisition of non-contiguous territory, and France had not recovered from the war with Germany.

For the sake of secrecy and expediency, the negotiations resulting in the Cyprus Convention had been carried on very quietly under the direction of Disraeli, as had the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. Having succeeded in his immediate purpose, Disraeli found himself under the necessity of justifying the action before his countrymen as he was simultaneously explaining it to the world. That all of his purposes had not come to light while the negotiations were in progress became evident in his first speech on the matter in the House of Commons on July 18. Here he said, in part — "In taking Cyprus, the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian. I only hope the House will not misunderstand our motives in occupying Cyprus and in encouraging those intimate relations between the government and population of Turkey. They are not movements of war; they are movements of peace and civilization."⁷³ And in the House of Lords he said:

My Lords, we occupy with respect to this part of the world [the Eastern Mediterranean] a peculiar position, which is shared by no other Power. Our Indian Empire is on every occasion . . . a source of great anxiety, and the time appears to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety. . . . There has been no want, on our part, of invitations to neutral Powers to join with us in preventing or in arresting war. Besides the great treaty of Paris, there was the tripartite treaty,⁷⁴ which if acted upon, would have pre-

⁷² *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXIX, 1345-1347.

⁷³ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXLI, 1773.

⁷⁴ The Treaty of 29 Aug., 1856, between England, France, and Austria, guaranteeing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

vented war. But that treaty could not be acted upon, from the unwillingness of the parties to it to act; and therefore we must . . . perceive that if anything could be effectually arranged, as far as our Oriental Empire is concerned, the arrangements must be made by ourselves. . . . Yielding to Russia what she has obtained,⁷⁶ we say to her, 'Thus far and no farther.' Asia is large enough for us both. . . . We believe that the result of the Convention will be order and tranquillity. . . . In taking Cyprus, the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian.⁷⁶

These statements to Parliament were further supplemented and elucidated in a speech of Disraeli's at the Mansion House on November 9.

There is no doubt [he said] that the administration of Cyprus by England will exercise the most beneficial and moral influence upon the contiguous dominions of the Sultan. This was a secondary influence in inducing us to take the step which we have done. It was as a place of arms, for which it is admirably calculated by its geographical position and the variety of its resources, that we fixed on Cyprus, after having examined all the other islands in the Mediterranean.⁷⁷

Months later Lord Salisbury, too, upheld the Cyprus Convention in a speech made at Manchester.

The occupation of Cyprus [he said] was merely following out the traditional policy of the English Government for a long time past. When the interest of Europe was centered in the conflicts that were waged in Spain, England occupied Gibraltar. When the interest of Europe was centered in the conflicts that were being waged in Italy, England occupied Malta; and now that there is a chance that the interests of Europe will be centered in Asia Minor or in Egypt, England has occupied Cyprus.⁷⁸

The acquisition of the island of Cyprus, however, was not received even with that degree of approval which had resulted

⁷⁶ That is, the fortresses of Batum, Ardahan, and Kars in Transcaucasia.

⁷⁶ *Hansard, ut supra*, pp. 1769-1772; Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 491-492.

⁷⁷ T. E. Kebbel, *Life of Lord Beaconsfield* (London, 1888), p. 148. Similar sentiments were expressed at a banquet at the Mansion House on 3 Aug., just after Disraeli and Salisbury had been presented with the freedom of the City. — See Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 480-483.

⁷⁸ Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 490.

from the purchase of the Khedive's Canal shares. Many members of Parliament, as well as military strategists and students of mercantile and imperial interests in other capacities failed to agree that a Euphrates Valley Railway was either practicable or possible from engineering or from political and commercial points of view. At the time the Cyprus Convention was first brought up in the House of Lords, the Earl of Camperdown, Lord Granville, and others cast aspersions on the "sanity and wisdom" of the Government in carrying out such a project, paying Turkey a large annual revenue for an island without harbors, swampy, and unsanitary, and useless as a naval base.⁷⁹ Gladstone called the Convention an "insane covenant" and denounced it roundly.⁸⁰ Others were apprehensive that England had merely contracted obligations which would commit her to a policy which would offend not only Russia, but Turkey and France as well, and that the very administration of Cyprus would be difficult, costly, and unsatisfactory.⁸¹

However, Cyprus had been acquired, as the Premier had said repeatedly, primarily as a place of arms, as a base of operations for the protection of routes to India. Even this aspect of the matter, although there were numerous apologists, failed to carry conviction of the Government's wisdom. One of the most able and scathing criticisms of Cyprus as a military base was that of Admiral Sir William Martin, who insisted that even if the Euphrates Valley Railway could offer any advantages, Cyprus would be useless as a place of arms, no matter how much money was spent in developing it. "For this worthless thing," he concluded, "we are pledged to defend a bankrupt and vicious government."⁸²

It was very widely supposed that the taking over of Cyprus, while carried out partly with the idea of safeguarding the Suez Canal, meant primarily that a railway was soon to be constructed through Mesopotamia from Alexandretta or Suedia, either by the

⁷⁹ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXLII, 28-30.

⁸⁰ Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 490.

⁸¹ *London Times*, 25 March, 1879.

⁸² Sir William Fanshawe Martin, *Cyprus as a Naval Station and a Place of Arms* (London, 1879), pp. 6, 11. One of his objections to Cyprus was that as a protection to a railway terminus it was useless, since it lay within range of guns which might be planted on the mainland. Apparently he did not see in that fact a corresponding advantage. Some later strategists have contended that Cyprus was wisely chosen. See, for instance, a statement by J. R. van Milligen in the *Contemporary Review*, CVIII (1915), 332; and, for other criticisms, J. L. Haddon, an engineer with long experience in Syria, in the *London Times*, 11 July, 1878; Sir William Palliser in *The Times*, 2 Feb., 1880; W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 29, 67-68; William Miller, in the *Cambridge Modern History*, XIII, 415; and Rev. H. T. F. Duckworth, *Some Pages in Levantine History* (London, 1906), pp. 3-18.

English Government or with Government assistance.⁸³ In answering his critics in the House of Lords on July 23, 1878, Lord Beaconsfield promised that within a year the roadsteads of Cyprus would be transformed into ample harbors for British fleets.⁸⁴

Government attitude once more encouraged private enterprise, notwithstanding the current stringency in the money market.⁸⁵ In December, 1878, it was reported in London that Ambassador Layard, on behalf of a group of British promoters, had submitted to the Turkish Government in a lengthy document a project for the construction of a Euphrates Valley line. The plan, in brief, rested on the assumption of entire financial responsibility for the road by the British Government. But in return for this and in lieu of payment of interest on sums to be expended, Turkey was to cede 10,000 square metres of land for every kilometre of line constructed, which was to extend from Ismid through Alexandria to the Persian Gulf. Also, as a guarantee of adequate return on the capital to be invested, estimated at £25,000,000, Turkey was to cede for a period to be determined the revenues of the pashaliks of Basrah, Damascus, and Bagdad. The Turkish Government was said to be very favorably disposed toward the proposition.⁸⁶

The promoters responsible for this scheme, it developed, were a group of men long interested in improved communication through Mesopotamia, formed under the chairmanship of W. P. Andrew into "An Association for promoting the Construction of a Railway from the Persian Gulf to Constantinople and the Mediterranean, affording alternate routes to British India and for developing the resources of Asia Minor."⁸⁷ The Association was headed at the outset by a Committee of fifty-five members, many of them prominent in the political world or of long connection with affairs in Asiatic Turkey. Overtures were made to the Government asking for official support of the Association's project, but this, as in 1857, the Government was very unwilling to give. In the face of the storm of disapproval which had greeted the Cyprus Convention, even the imperialistic Lord Salisbury, who in July, 1878, had said "Whatever happens, whatever Ministry be in power, the people of this country will never allow Russian influence to be supreme in the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris," refused to give the least countenance to the Associa-

⁸³ Lady Anne Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁸⁴ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXLII, 30.

⁸⁵ W. S. Blunt, "An Indo-Mediterranean Railway: Fiction and Fact," in the *Fortnightly Review*, XXXII, 702 f.

⁸⁶ *London Times*, 17 Dec., 1878.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 Jan., 1879; Andrew, *The Euphrates Valley: A Lecture*, p. 95.

tion's scheme.⁸⁸ As the Government thus deserted its own plan, Cyprus did not become a place of arms⁸⁹ and the Euphrates Valley project, already modified to become a part of a greater line reaching from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf and perhaps on to India, again resolved itself into an academic matter.

It next captured public attention when the Suez Canal was no longer able without extensive alterations to provide an adequate channel for eastern shipping. While the canal had barely justified itself as a commercial venture during the early years after its completion, by 1882 it was swamped with traffic. In 1870, 486 vessels, representing 654, 915 gross tons, made use of that waterway. By 1882 this had grown to 3198 vessels and 7,122,125 gross tons, on which tolls amounting to £2,422,000 were paid.⁹⁰ Vessels were tied up for days at either end of the canal awaiting turns to pass through, while many of the newer and larger steamships because of their draught could not use the canal at all. Proposals to enlarge the canal, either by widening and deepening the existing channel or by having a new and parallel canal constructed, perhaps by a separate company, provoked a new examination of the Euphrates Railway as a commercial and strategic artery, since, many believed, this could be built more cheaply than the canal could be enlarged.

In January, 1882, the Turkish Government approved the application of an English group for permission with guarantees to build a railway from Tripoli in Syria *via* Aleppo to the Euphrates at Hit, where a branch line would cross to Bagdad, and from Hit to Grane on the Persian Gulf. It was not supposed by these promoters that after so much procrastination the English Government would give a financial guarantee, and private capital alone was looked to.⁹¹ But as in many other similar undertakings, capital looked askance at a venture which did not even have the moral backing of the home authorities, and the matter fell through.

⁸⁸ Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 492; W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 29. Mr. Blunt accounted himself largely responsible for Salisbury's change of attitude with regard to the railway scheme.

⁸⁹ Cyprus still remains the black sheep of Britain's naval bases. During the World War it was used as bait with which to tempt Greece, and the final disposition of the island is still a matter of some doubt. Administrative problems have always been difficult, and very little money has been spent in developing the island in any way, although some £16,000 was spent in slightly improving the harbor at Famagusta. — J. P. Middleton, "Cyprus under British Rule," in the *Quarterly Review*, 423; *The Nineteenth Century*, LXXIX, 252; *The Near East*, XV, 130; XVI, 148.

⁹⁰ Augustus Mongredien, *The Suez Canal Question* (London, 1883), pp. 4-5, 7-8.

⁹¹ Statement of Mr. Cazalet, the chief promoter, as reported in the *London Times*, 2 Feb., 1882.

In July of the same year Lord Lamington took occasion to call up the subject of a Euphrates Valley Railway for debate in the House of Lords. He believed it would be impossible to widen the canal and impracticable to construct a new one, but wholly practicable to build the railway for the same general purpose, in support of which he cited evidence dating back to 1834. The railway, he thought, would save ten days in time between London and Lahore and at least five days between London and Bombay, and "considering that nine-tenths of the traffic passing through the canal was British, he asked their Lordships whether they were prepared to make the same blunder now with respect to the railway that they made in years gone by with regard to the canal."⁹² The Earl of Kimberley, speaking for the Foreign Secretary, said that no one doubted the value of one or all alternative routes, but that it did not follow that the Government ought to guarantee it, and since the project was not likely to succeed without Government backing he was afraid "the project must remain where it had long been: interesting, but not likely soon to be carried out." In this he was supported by the Earl of Derby, who saw no military necessity for the road and thought it much more important to widen the canal; and by Lords Ellenborough and Blantyre, and the Earl of Carnarvon, who urged the Government "to omit nothing to secure the safety and efficiency of the old route by the Cape."⁹³ Once more the attitude of Parliament put a quietus on active measures for financing a railway company.⁹⁴

The railway plan continued to maintain its usual desultory existence through the next few years. Again brought up in the House of Lords on July 26, 1883, by Lord Lamington, whose faith seemed hardly to have been shaken by previous failures, it was given lip service by some of the Cabinet members who were plainly embarrassed by a matter which was popular enough and in favor of which many impressive arguments and much weighty evidence could be presented, but which as a Government issue had been sidetracked by the Conservatives in 1878 and 1879 and to all

⁹² *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCLXXII, 644-685; *The Times*, 18 July, 1882.

⁹³ *Hansard*, *ut supra*, pp. 682-685.

⁹⁴ See *The Times* for 21 July, 2 and 14 Sept., 1882. Many of the press notices were written or inspired by Sir William Andrew, who was knighted early in the year in recognition of his long devotion to an imperial cause. See his *Euphrates Valley Route to India* . . . pp. 2 ff. The greater part of the many books and pamphlets published by him were mere repetitions of Parliamentary debates, letters written by prominent friends of the Euphrates Valley line, evidence given before Parliamentary committees, and complimentary press notices of his own efforts in behalf of the cause.

intents and purposes permanently abandoned after the accession of the Liberal Party in 1880. Lord Salisbury "thought it was one of the most important questions of the day," but hardly thought the Government should be urged to take it up "at that time."⁹⁵ It was also debated before the Royal United Service Institution in 1884, and elsewhere discussed in connection with the construction of railways through the European provinces of Turkey toward Constantinople.⁹⁶ Half-hearted and futile attempts were made in 1885 and 1886 to revive a lost cause.⁹⁷

In 1887 some new interest was injected into a railway through Mesopotamia by the actual construction of shore lines and the mobilizing of private capital for the building of longer lines in Asiatic Turkey. The humble beginnings of a network of railway lines east of the Bosphorus were laid, not in Syria or in Mesopotamia, where railways of all sorts had been projected for a generation, but in Anatolia, and were laid out with little or no reference to their becoming parts of a great system which might eventually provide a road from the shores of Europe to the outer edges of India. In 1856, the year in which the Euphrates Valley line was first brought to the attention of the English public, an English concern obtained a concession for a line from Smyrna to Aidin. This road, opened in 1866, was still in British hands in 1887. Another British group owned the Mersina-Adana line and controlled the Haidar Pasha-Ismid Railway, built between 1871 and 1873 by the Turkish Government.⁹⁸ French interests also had obtained a foothold with the construction of a Smyrna-Cassaba railway and the gaining of rights for another short line.

These lines, however, were of little more than local importance and were unrelated. A new era of railway development in Asiatic Turkey was inaugurated when, in 1887, two rival groups of European capitalists approached the Ottoman Government for rights to build a railway line from the Straits to Angora, Diarbekr,

⁹⁵ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCLXXXII, 507-512; *London Times*, 27 July, 1883. See the characteristic letter by Sir William Andrew in *The Times* for 31 July.

⁹⁶ *London Times*, 29 March, 11 Aug., 4 Sept., 3 Dec., 1884, 21 Jan., 1885; *Journal of the East India Assn.*, XVIII, 4-38. "The Mutual Advantages of the Connection between England and Her Indian Empire," a paper by Gen. Sir Orfeur Cavenagh, K.C.S.I.; Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles M. MacGregor, *The Defence of India: a Strategic Study (Confidential)*, (Simla, 1884).

⁹⁷ *London Times*, 9 and 11 April, 16 Dec., 1885, 6 Aug., 1886; Löher and Joyner, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-292. All real intention of developing Cyprus as a base was given up with the occupation of Egypt in 1882. — *The Near East*, XXIV, 241; Coke, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

⁹⁸ Earle, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Jastrow, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

and Bagdad. An English group, the holders of the Haidar Pasha Railway, were first on the ground, proposing, under suitable guarantees, to construct the line on a broad gauge. A French company offered a competing proposition for a narrow gauge line. The Turkish Government had little hesitation in prescribing a broad gauge road, but tended to favor the French group which offered the more attractive financial scheme. This led to the suspicion in England "that there was a political object covering the obstruction offered by the French combination, supported by diplomatic influence."⁹⁹ Later in the year, however, the English group won a concession for a broad gauge line to be built between Ismid and Diarbekr, on condition that the Porte be satisfied as to the financial soundness of the promoters before construction was begun. But on that rock the scheme foundered.¹⁰⁰ Not enough capital could be found in England to put through such a private venture unsupported by diplomatic backing, and the last opportunity for the construction of a line through Mesopotamia under British auspices was lost. The next year the question of the Turkish Asiatic railways was settled by a grant of the right of extending the Scutari-Ismid line to Angora, and eventually to Bagdad, to "a certain Herr Cualla, representing . . . some German banking firms."¹⁰¹ The Euphrates Valley Railway as such was a thing of the past, for it was only a vision. The Bagdad Railway was becoming a thing of flesh and blood, and its blood was not British.¹⁰²

Another significant event, the greater meaning of which was not appreciated at the time, was the inauguration of through service between western capitals and Constantinople in the summer of 1888, bringing London and Berlin within three and one-

⁹⁹ London *Times*, 2 and 10 May, 1887; Robert de Caix, "La France et les Chemins de Fer d'Asie Turque," in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, XXXVI, 385-394; also his articles in *L'Asie Française*, XIII, 333-336, 402-405; *ibid.*, XIV, 144-146; G. Saint-Ives, "Les Chemins de Fer Française dans la Turquie d'Asie," in *Qués. Dip. et Col.*, XXXVII, 518-522.

¹⁰⁰ London *Times*, 9 Aug., 4, 6, and 20 Oct., 1887.

¹⁰¹ Sir Arthur Wingate, *Palestine, Mesopotamia, and the Jews* (London, 1920), pp. 233-234; *The Times*, 1 Oct., 1888. *The Times* made it appear that the Turkish Government, in thus handing the concession over to German interests, violated a preferential clause in the concession awarded to the holders of the Haidar Pasha Railway some years before.

¹⁰² *Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1902, pp. 245-274, "Persia and the Persian Gulf." There continued to be some talk of defeating German railway plans by the construction of a railway from a Mediterranean port to the Persian Gulf along the general lines of the Euphrates Valley project until the opening of the World War. These proposals did not represent any definite purpose, however, as much as chagrin at the success of German capital in a field in which British interests had failed. See Hall, *Reconstruction in Turkey*, p. 102.

half days of the Golden Horn. "Punctual to the minute," ran a despatch from Constantinople on August 14, "the first direct international through train reached Stamboul station at a quarter to eight o'clock this morning, bringing numerous passengers from Paris, Vienna, Pesth, Belgrade, and Sofia."¹⁰³ But this announcement, which was greeted with joy in London, did not signify a great stride toward a direct route from London to Lahore, of which Englishmen had dreamed, but rather a stage in the evolution of a nightmarish road from Berlin to Bagdad.

The *Bagdadbahn* was destined never to be completed as planned by German interests. Begun soon after the original act of concession of March 5, 1903, it languished after the first section was completed the following year because of obstacles of all kinds — physical, financial, and political. Originally intended to extend from Scutari, opposite Constantinople, to the Persian Gulf, it had eventually to find a terminus in Bagdad. Great Britain, by recognizing the independence of various Arab chieftains in lower Mesopotamia, blocked the way to Basrah.¹⁰⁴ Even the portion of the main line between Constantinople and Bagdad was not complete when the World War opened: two mountain sections still lacked: a vital factor during the campaigns in Mesopotamia.

Even in its unfinished state, the Bagdad line was too great a threat to the safety of India and the security of British commercial interests in Mesopotamia to be overlooked. At a time when imperial forces could hardly be spared from the western front of war operations, a Mesopotamian campaign was considered necessary. Even the disaster which befell the first expeditionary force in 1916 only prompted the fitting out of larger and more successful armies in 1917.¹⁰⁵ To protect the alternative route to India, Bagdad and Mosul were occupied and Mesopotamia passed into British hands. The post-war Mandates Commission was content to translate a control *de facto* into one *de jure*, a situation further altered by the setting up by Great Britain for practical purposes of a nominally independent Kingdom of Iraq.¹⁰⁶

Thus, the enterprise of foreign capitalists, representing a com-

¹⁰³ London *Times*, 16 Aug., 12 Nov., 1888.

¹⁰⁴ *Parl. Pap.*, 1911, No. [C. 5635], Bagdad Railway No. 1; A. von Gwinner, "The Bagdad Railway and the Question of British Coöperation," in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1909; Earle, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-208; A. T. Mahan, *Retrospect and Prospect* (Boston, 1902), pp. 209-251; *Geographical Journal*, XLI, 244-248 (with maps); *Quarterly Review*, CCXXVIII, 491-528; H. Vimard, "Le Chemin de Fer de Bagdad," in *L'Asie Française*, XIII, 119-123, 306-310.

¹⁰⁵ A. T. Clark, *To Bagdad with the British* (New York, 1918).

¹⁰⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1920, No. [C. 1061], Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; George Louis Beer, *African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference* (New York, 1923), pp. 417-427.

mercial and colonial rival, was required in Mesopotamia as in Egypt to cause a change in British policy from one which carefully avoided political responsibilities to one of direct intervention. By 1914 the Ottoman Empire, no longer a ward of Great Britain, was inadequate as an "occupier" of the routes to the East. The Eastern Question had reached a new stage in which the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was at last demanded in the interests of the dominant Powers of Europe. Mandates replaced pashaliks under the new dispensation, with sovereignty residing in London and Paris instead of Constantinople. These fundamental changes, however, are more apparent than real. During most of the nineteenth century the real authority in eastern affairs resided in London and Paris. One intermediate stage — that of Constantinople — has since been removed in the application of that authority. But in those portions of the former Turkish domain essential to the control of the two trunk routes to the East, the territories embraced in the kingdoms of Egypt, Iraq, and the Hedjaz, in Palestine and the Emirate of Transjordan, Great Britain still prefers to apply a sovereign power more or less indirectly.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CANAL AND THE CONTROL OF EGYPT

THE OPENING of the Suez Canal in November, 1869, far from terminating the problems of the Suez Canal Company, merely changed the character of those to be met. The difficulties immediately looming up were several. In the first place, the canal was not at all complete. Many tasks had been performed in a temporary fashion in order to make possible the official opening on the date set months before. Many portions of the waterway had not yet been deepened to the projected minimum of 26 feet. The buoys marking the main channel in many places were only logs. Signaling arrangements along the line of the canal were not finished. In three or four places the bends in the channel were so abrupt as to make navigation dangerous. The *gares* or sidings, too, were inadequate both in size and number. But these difficulties, while considerable, wanted only a continuation of construction work for their removal. Far more serious was the fact that the Company lacked the funds necessary for the full completion of the work and the giving of promised services to commerce. Distressing, too, was the disagreement which immediately arose between shipping interests and the Canal Company concerning the mode of measuring vessels for the collection of tolls. Finally, the international status of the canal was a nice problem, one which intrigued the officers of the Company and the statesmen of maritime Powers alike for several years to come, until political exigencies and natural evolutionary processes furnished the inevitable solution.

Various financial difficulties easily overshadowed all of the others during the first few years after the opening of the waterway. It is not proposed to enter here upon the complex financial history of the Company, which is an extensive subject and in many details has little bearing on the canal as an essential route of trade and communication.¹ An outline of some of the issues and their

¹ For a good résumé of this phase of canal history, see L. M. Rossignol, *Le Canal de Suez* (Paris, 1898), pp. 1-5, *passim*.

settlement, however, will be necessary to explain the development of the canal from a French-owned waterway, which might be used under certain prescribed conditions by British merchant vessels, into a great British imperial highway.

One of the most pressing questions facing the Company after 1869, that of funds for the completion and improvement of the canal, was solved by the transfer to the Khedive, who had already acquired the ownership of the Fresh Water Canal, of the right of using that waterway for various purposes formerly reserved to the Company. For this and fishing rights in the Lakes he paid the Company £400,000. In addition to this, he purchased the Company's hospitals and warehouses at Damietta and Boulac, no longer needed in connection with the canal, by surrendering to the Company the interest-bearing coupons of his canal shares for the succeeding twenty-five years to the year 1895. These coupons were used by the Company as collateral for a new bond issue which, after disputes concerning the actual value of the coupons had been settled, netted the Company an additional £1,200,000.² These funds were sufficient to tide over a period of considerable expense and small earnings until somewhat more stable conditions were reached. With these means the canal was finished, improved, and maintained while the merchant marines of European countries became accustomed to the new channel.

The question of tolls was not so easily solved. By the terms of the original concession, the Company were given the right to levy a maximum charge of ten francs per ton "of capacity" on vessels passing through the canal. This statement, which doubtless appeared definite enough to the projector, was presently found capable of receiving varying interpretations. The question raised was whether the terms of the concession referred to ton of measurement or to ton of displacement, and this was further complicated by the different rules of measurement in use in different countries. The Canal Company at the outset collected ten francs per ton on the net registered tonnage of vessels as shown by their ships' papers. As this tonnage was often far less than the real cargo-carrying capacity of the ship, in this respect the Company's usage resulted in unfair, though involuntary, discrimination.³

Meanwhile the operation of the canal had yielded no profits, and the shareholders were becoming impatient for the financial returns so long anticipated. On March 4, 1872, the Company

² London *Times*, 30 May, 1870; Percy Fitzgerald, *The Great Canal at Suez*, II, 74, 84. Fitzgerald gives a fairly complete, though not particularly illuminating, history of the financial transactions of the Company up to the year 1895.

³ J. Charles-Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez*, II, 11-16; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 131-138.

adopted a resolution which construed the *tonneau de capacité* of a vessel to be its real cargo capacity.⁴ This bore hardly on English ships particularly, since it was maintained by the Canal officials that the gross tonnage in English vessels was not fully measured. The new rates had the effect of increasing the tolls on English ships by about 30% at the moment when the canal was beginning to prove essential to shipping interests. As a result, a storm of opposition to the Company's policy arose in England⁵ and, to a lesser extent, in France and Italy, and the increased rates were paid only under protest. The controversy took on a political complexion, also, when it was rumored in Paris that the Porte, at the instigation of Great Britain, had officially protested against the new rates, and again when some of the suits arising under the new arrangement were tried in French consular courts.⁶

The matter was finally referred to an International Commission consisting of the representatives of twelve European states selected by the Porte which sat at Constantinople during the last three months of 1873. Its report, given in December of that year, was of considerable importance. It laid the basis for an international plan of tonnage measurements, and its findings were, on the whole, acceptable both to the Canal Company and to shipping interests, enabling the latter "to carry on business without being continually disturbed by changes in the tolls imposed by the Canal Company."⁷ De Lesseps, however, did not accept the award without a trial of strength. At first he announced that he would hold the Porte responsible for all losses incurred from the application of this ruling, estimated at about 700,000 francs per month, and stated his intention of resisting the enforcement of the decision of the Commission to the extent of closing and abandoning the canal itself.⁸

This crisis brought forth the first indications that the Suez

⁴ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 304-309, the text of the resolution. See Anon., *The Suez Canal* (London, 1872), pp. 5, 6. This pamphlet states that because of the increase in the rates levied by the Company some English shipping returned to the Cape route.

⁵ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CCXI, 1687; CCXII, p. 101; Earl Granville to Sir H. Elliot, 31 Aug., 1872, quoted in Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 154-166; *The Suez Canal* (pamphlet: *op. cit.*), pp. 5-6.

⁶ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXII, pp. 427-428; CCXIV, p. 369; *London Times*, 5, 12, and 28 March, 1873.

⁷ *Annual Register*, 1873, Pt. I, 242; *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXVIII, 334-335, 1408; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, II, 16-24. The Suez Canal Company was not represented on this Commission.

⁸ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXVIII, 714-715, 1096. It was suggested in the House of Commons on April 17, that the threatened closing of the canal might go far toward lending weight to the report of the Select Committee which had considered the advisability of a British alternative route two years before.

Canal was something more than the property of a corporation organized under a charter from the Viceroy of Egypt. In April, 1874, an Egyptian force of 10,000 troops, called out by instructions from the Porte under the influence of British representations, and commanded by an English officer, marched to the line of the canal and occupied certain strategic points. At the same time an Egyptian frigate was sent to Port Saïd to keep the mouth of the canal open.⁹ In view of these moves, De Lesseps reconsidered his hasty words and gave ear to the advice of the French Government that he comply with the ruling of the Tolls Commission and reserve his protests for a further hearing.¹⁰ He agreed, therefore, to continue operating the canal, although until the British Government became a shareholder in the Company the ruling of the International Commission was violated in regard to some of the details of its provisions concerning the measurement of vessels.¹¹

During the course of this heated controversy several interesting points had been raised concerning the status of the canal and the legal position of the Canal Company.¹² De Lesseps' contention that the Company, chartered under Egyptian auspices, could not be sued in French courts was lost in a test case brought against the Company by the *Messageries Maritimes*. Thus the essential French character of the Company itself was maintained.¹³ The interests of the Powers in the canal itself, however, had been established by the International Commission and its award. But throughout the negotiations the primacy of British concern had not only made itself apparent in debates in the House of Commons and in the prompting of action on the part of the Turkish and Egyptian Governments, but it had also been tacitly recognized by the other Powers. The acknowledgment by De Lesseps and his associates of the authority of the award of the International Commission when promulgated by the Turkish Government constituted a victory for British diplomacy. Great Britain was a Power to be reckoned with as much after the completion of the canal as during the trying days of its construction. The position of the Canal Company, then, was in several respects anomalous. It was an international corporation subject to a Turco-Egyptian charter, to French maritime law, and to the operation

⁹ G. C. Thompson, *Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield*, 1875-1880, I, 248; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, II, 25-27.

¹⁰ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXVIII, 1182.

¹¹ J. E. Nourse, *The Maritime Canal of Suez*, p. 80.

¹² T. J. Lawrence, *The Suez Canal in International Law* (London, 1884), pp. 43-44.

¹³ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, CCXVIII, 334-335, 714-715, 1096, 1408.

of British diplomacy, and the greatest of these was unquestionably the will of Great Britain.

At the same time, the Company possessed one distinct advantage. Where there were several masters there was divided authority, and none could easily exact obedience. Within two months after the Company had been compelled to bow the knee to the Porte, British political agents were complaining of the measuring of merchant vessels according to the plan lately condemned by the International Commission.¹⁴ There was no longer any doubt as to the illegality of this practice, but despite both protests and threats, officials of the Company continued to follow their pleasure, denying that unfair tactics were being pursued, since vessels used the canal at the option of their owners. As De Lesseps had anticipated, the Porte hesitated to employ force in executing the award of the Commission, since the Company now had the open sympathy of the French Government. Indeed, De Lesseps even despatched his son, Charles, an officer of the Company, to Constantinople to secure with French aid a reversal of the decision of the Commission, pointing out at the same time that unless more funds were forthcoming the upkeep of the canal could not be assured.

Although the English Government appear to have felt sympathy for the financial plight of the Company, the arrogant attitude of the officials could not but invite hostility. The Turkish Government were inclined to favor the pleas of the Company for reconsideration of the late decision, but the British Ambassador, while "sympathetic," stood firmly by the legal nature of the award of the Commission. In the end, after vainly suggesting various compromises, M. Charles de Lesseps had to return to Paris defeated. The British had maintained their stand that the Canal Company was primarily Turkish and not French, and hence Turkish mandates were binding. This, of course, only placed the question of tolls where it had been earlier, with the Canal Company in revolt against the Turkish mandate and with no machinery ready at hand for the enforcement of the tolls decision.¹⁵

The tolls question was an issue of sufficient importance to define the international status of the Suez Canal Company with considerable clarity.¹⁶ The controversy produced a general agreement among the Powers that while the canal was an artificial

¹⁴ Official correspondence, quoted in Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 238 ff.

¹⁵ *Annual Register*, 1873, Pt. I, 242.

¹⁶ This is well illustrated by the debates in the House of Commons. See *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CXII, 101.

channel, it was essentially a narrow strait between two bodies of open sea, and as such was a matter of international concern. It also elicited from the Powers an admission that the Canal Company had the right to levy tolls, though subject to the concessions issued by the Khedive of Egypt and confirmed by the Sultan and in keeping with international usage as to measurements of vessels. At the same time, the operation of the canal practically, even if not formally, became subject to international law, since various Powers entered into negotiations with the Company, giving that body a quasi-international status, while the partial regulation of canal affairs by Britain and France, operating through the medium of the Sultan and the Khedive, contributed to the same effect.¹⁷

The exercise of power through these channels, however, was not satisfactory to the principal patron of the canal. The methods available were too difficult and devious and not sufficiently effective. It was inevitable after the completion of the waterway was once assured that the possibility of regulating that channel by direct action of some kind and under adequate international sanction would become the concern of the British Government at an early date. Almost from the moment the waterway was opened to commerce the British Foreign Office undertook to secure its full neutrality by a series of international engagements, and at the same time remained constantly alert to discover any means of acquiring full ownership of the canal. The likelihood of some change in control was increased, not merely by the tolls question and the problem as to the legal situation of the Company, but more particularly by the financial embarrassment of the Company, which in spite of temporary alleviation was nearly bankrupt for some years after the opening of the waterway.¹⁸

The first suggestions which reached De Lesseps that the sale of a part or all of the Company's interests be made to England, as was indirectly suggested by Lord Granville, were thrown out by the former without a moment's hesitation. It was reported in 1871 that the projector did contemplate with some favor the possibility of transferring control of the Company to an English commercial concern in order to protect French investors, but this project was not then approved by the British Foreign Office.¹⁹ The further proposal of De Lesseps that the canal be purchased by the Powers jointly and operated under an International Administration, while satisfactory to the British Government at the

¹⁷ Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49.

¹⁸ The Khedive appears to have been in favor of the acquisition by Great Britain of some rights of ownership in the Canal as the best guarantee of its safety and profitable use. Cf. *Quarterly Review*, CLXV, 441-445.

¹⁹ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, II, 273-276; *Quarterly Review*, CLXV, 441-445.

moment, was wholly unacceptable to the Khedive and the Ottoman Government, who lost no time in making their attitude a matter of record. Ottoman territorial rights in the canal could hardly be maintained in the face of such a joint administration. At this point the matter rested while the question of tariffs was being threshed out by the International Commission, the Ottoman Government, and the foreign diplomatic corps at Constantinople.

By 1875 the Suez Canal was beginning to produce profits for its owners, and the possibility that the Company might be compelled to sell out its interests because of lack of funds grew remote. At this time, however, a new situation arose affecting the future of the canal because of the financial predicament of the Khedive, who was in desperate need of funds. Although his reign had begun under very promising auspices, Ismaïl had failed to maintain the prestige of his predecessors in the eyes of foreign countries, not because he attached less importance to the maintenance of confidence abroad, but because he undertook to purchase high regard at prices which threatened the total economic ruin of his country. Early in his official life he learned the ease with which ready money could be acquired and solicitude and flattery obtained by the process of floating foreign loans. So as time went on and the Pasha's credit waned, his personal pleasures and his passion for keeping up appearances led to the most wasteful financial dissipation.²⁰ In 1875, after having squandered vast fortunes, the Khedive was again in desperate need of funds. But by this time the low ebb of his credit and the known urgency of his need made impossible the borrowing of further money except under almost prohibitive terms.

The extravagancies and increasing irresponsibility of the Khedive, together with the economic hold on his resources which was being acquired by continental states through enormous loans, had already led to some speculation in England as to the effect of such matters on the future of the canal, when it became known in November, 1875, that Ismaïl was under the necessity of raising the sum of £4,000,000 immediately and on almost any terms to pay interest on loans already contracted. It also became known in London through careful inquiries on the part of Gen. Edward Stanton, British Consul at Cairo, that the Khedive was contem-

²⁰ This is well summarized in the report of Mr. Stephen Cave, who was sent out to Egypt to examine the financial condition of that country about the time of the purchase of the Khedive's Canal shares by the British Government. This report is given in J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is*, Appendix G, pp. 372-392. The celebrations connected with the opening of the Canal in 1869 alone cost approximately £1,300,000. — A. E. P. Brome Weigall, *A History of Events in Egypt from 1798 to 1914*, p. 104, *passim*.

plating using his canal shares as security for a loan from certain French capitalists.²¹ This in effect meant the permanent loss of the shares to the Khedive. Lord Derby, disturbed at this thought of the alienation of the shares, on November 20 intimated to M. Gavard, of the French Embassy, that the British Government, whose national interests in the canal were four times those of all the rest of the world, and who valued the canal as a portion of the highway to India, would view with strong disfavor the proposed disposition of the Khedive's shares. It was pointed out that the only two agencies through which the British could bring pressure to bear on the Directors of the Canal Company were the Khedive and the Porte. And since it was difficult to ascertain how far British influence at the Porte would be efficacious, it was a matter of deep concern to the British Government that the Khedive should not dispose of his interests in the canal.²² The Khedive himself was informed that "Her Majesty's Government would regard as a violation of the Firman of the Porte and as inconsistent with the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, any act of the Khedive dispossessing himself of the control over the Suez Canal."²³ This pronouncement was made partly with the object of distinguishing between property rights in the canal as a commercial enterprise and the territorial rights inherent in the Egyptian Government.

In this dilemma, the Khedive saw but one feasible alternative, which was to offer his shares in the Canal Company, believed to be 177,642 in number, to the British Government for £4,000,000, the sum required by his own immediate obligations. His willingness to effect such a sale was communicated to Gen. Stanton on November 23, and was instantly telegraphed to the British Foreign Office. This situation, which had developed very suddenly as well as secretly, placed the British Government in a delicate position. There was considerable doubt, in the first place, as to the attitude of France toward the transaction, in view of the official objection of the Foreign Secretary toward a similar French deal. And in the second place, as Parliament was not in session, the finding of £4,000,000 within the space of a few days was a large problem in itself. The first question was solved with little hesitation by determining to brave the anticipated wrath of the French. The second difficulty, which for a moment loomed up as insuperable, was taken in hand by Premier Disraeli, and solved in a characteristic manner. Already imbued with imperialistic

²¹ *Parliamentary Paper*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], Egypt No. 1, p. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 3; Thompson, *op. cit.*, I, 248.

²³ Quoted in Thompson, *op. cit.*, I, 248.

spirit and believing that an unparalleled opportunity had presented itself, Disraeli instructed Gen. Stanton on the twenty-third to carry through arrangements for securing the shares. At the same time he sought out his friend Baron de Rothschild, the head of a great international banking concern, and asked whether, on his promise that Parliament would repay the money immediately after convening, the firm of Rothschild could advance the necessary funds.²⁴

The time was short and the risks appeared large, but the Baron immediately answered in the affirmative. On the twenty-fifth he formally communicated his answer to the Premier:

As soon as we . . . receive the orders from the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, we shall be prepared to hold at the disposal of the Egyptian Government four millions sterling, one million on December 1, and the remaining three millions during December and January. A $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ commission will be charged and 5% interest until the advance is repaid. There is an understanding also that the Government will apply to Parliament for repayment, as soon as practicable.²⁵

On this basis the purchase was consummated, the word of the Prime Minister serving as bond for the approval of Parliament.

The remaining details of the purchase were carried out with a promptness which suggested anxiety lest some obstruction be placed in the way of the actual transfer of shares. An agreement was drawn up by Gen. Stanton and signed by him and by the Khedive wherein the terms of the transfer were set down. Inasmuch as the interest-bearing coupons up to the year 1895 had already been detached from the bonds, the Egyptian Government agreed to pay to Great Britain the 5% per annum during the period for which the coupons were lacking, charging this amount to the revenues of Egypt. Upon surrender of the shares, the British Government was to pay £1,000,000 on December 1, and the remainder in December and January. Also, since it had been discovered that the Khedive owned 176,602 shares instead of the presumed 177,642, the price of 1040 shares was deducted from the four million pounds originally agreed upon.²⁶

²⁴ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXXVII, 266-267; *British and Foreign State Papers*, LXVI, 670-671.

²⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], p. 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7. The 1040 shares had been disposed of to French capitalists some ten years earlier, of which fact the Khedive's Ministers professed to be ignorant until the transfer was in process of being effected.

Thus, within the space of a week and altogether without the procrastination usually connected with official negotiations, the British Government became a large shareholder in the Company whose work and whose very existence it had so long attempted to destroy. Yet it was with peculiar satisfaction that the British Ministers followed in telegraphic reports the details of the counting, registering, boxing, and shipping of the shares from Alexandria and their despatch to England on the royal mail steamer *Malabar* at the close of the year. Destiny, it was felt, had been fulfilled, and Great Britain had entered into a share of ownership which would undoubtedly secure the direct control of an essential part of the principal highway to India. Of the further negotiations to be carried on and difficulties to be encountered before this direct control could become to any great degree effective, there was then no inkling.

By slow degrees the English public learned that what the Prime Minister had purchased in November, 1875, had not been the Suez Canal, or the control of the Suez Canal Company, but only a minority of the outstanding shares issued by the Company. These holdings were sufficient in value to give the British Government a considerable voice in the affairs of the Canal Company, even though on the strength of these shares alone the Company's policy could not be controlled. For a time it was an open question whether a rather high price had not been paid for such advantages as had been gained — a very high price, in view of the charges of inconsistency and unfair play which the French were inclined to bring forward. Considerable time was required to solve the problem as to the amount of real power which had been gained by the purchase, but attempts were made at once to quiet French suspicions. On November 27, 1875, Lord Derby despatched a note to the French Ambassador, the Marquis d'Harcourt, explaining the transaction that had lately taken place. England had no wish, he said, that the Khedive should sell his shares or that the *status quo* in Egypt should be altered in the least. But the British had no power to prevent the sale of the shares, and since the Khedive was apparently determined to sell, the British Government had used the only means at their command to prevent the possibility of the shares falling into the hands of interests which might not be favorable to Great Britain. For this purpose the Government had been compelled to act quickly in order to exploit the opportunity at all. England's object, it was carefully pointed out, was not to establish an exclusive right, which could not be done with a minority of the shares in any event,

but it was rather to prohibit the establishment of an exclusive right.²⁷

The French Government expressed the fear that if the Egyptian Government should fail in paying the £200,000 interest on the shares, England would use some means of coercion which would establish English authority in Egypt. Lord Derby disclaimed any intention on the part of the British Government of taking such action at any time. He personally had favored, he said, the direction of the canal by an International Commission, like that for the Danube, but as the French Government had been opposed to such a plan, he had not brought it forward. However, the passage should be kept free for everyone.²⁸ The situation was smoothed out more readily than had been expected, partly by the surprising attitude displayed by De Lesseps. While he must have felt deeply chagrined at the *coup* which had made the traditional enemy of the Suez Canal Company its greatest single shareholder, he pretended to see only fortunate results. "I consider as very good fortune," he said, "this singular power which will be established between the French and the English for the exploitation, purely industrial and necessarily pacific, of the Suez Canal."²⁹ And in a letter to the British Ambassador in Paris, dated November 24, he put the best light he could upon the transaction, while indulging at the same time in a bit of excusable reproach:

Some of the share holders are concerned with the purchase by the English Government of the Khedive's shares. This anxiety is needless, because when the Canal was first started an important share in the subscription was set aside for English capitalists.

However, at that time France and Egypt completed the task alone.

The British Government, which had no financial interest in the undertaking, put every obstacle in the way of the work which had an injurious effect upon the private interests of Egyptian and French share holders.

The English nation now accepts the share in the Canal

²⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], p. 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9; *Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques, Affaires du Canal de Suez* (French Yellow Book, Nov., 1875). This mention of an International Commission was doubtless to neutralize French objections to the purchase of the shares. Now that Great Britain was entrenched as a large shareholder, presumably the French would have welcomed such a Commission. French fears are the more interesting in view of British intervention in Egypt a few years later.

²⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], p. 9.

Company which has been loyally reserved for her, and this action can only be to the effect that England will abandon her long-standing attitude of hostility toward the interests of the original share holders of the Canal.

I think this community of interests is a most fortunate occurrence.⁸⁰

In return for this courtesy, the British Ambassador at Paris was instructed to tell M. de Lesseps, "that England's object in the purchase is for the general interest of commerce, and that M. de Lesseps' pre-eminent part in the construction of the Canal will be recognized and England will always be found anxious to support him in any measures conducive to its welfare."⁸¹

European sentiment generally sanctioned the action of the British Government as a step which could not fail of insuring the safety of the canal and its improvement as a waterway. Prince Bismarck believed that the British Government had "done the right thing at the right moment in regard to the Suez Canal."⁸² In Italy England's sudden change in attitude toward the canal after having opposed it for so many years was explained by the fact that Turkey was no longer a good ally for England and that a new ally was necessary if Russia was to be opposed successfully in Asia. The new ally was to be Egypt.⁸³ On the whole matter the Porte maintained an ominous silence.

Complications were not long in appearing, however. Having disposed of his canal shares so easily and advantageously, and still being in dire need of funds, the Khedive bethought him of other holdings which he might similarly dispose of. The original Act of Concession reserved to the Khedive 15% of the net revenue of the Suez Canal. This the Khedive next proposed to sell to Great Britain, hoping that the objections raised on a former occasion would be set aside now that the British Government was a shareholder. He pointed out to Maj.-Gen. Stanton that this right might easily carry with it greater power over the Company than the possession of the shares themselves.⁸⁴ The knowledge that the French Government were anxious to acquire this right again produced a rather delicate situation. It was tactfully solved, however, when Lord Derby, as if entirely ignorant of French negotiations, explained to D'Harcourt that the proposition for the sale of the Khedive's right had been made, of which the

⁸⁰ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], pp. 10-11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 20.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-17, *passim*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

English Government scarcely approved since the shares already purchased by Britain had a certain claim on the revenue derived from the Khedive's royalties. At the same time the Khedive was apprised of England's position with reference to the proposed sale and was strongly counselled to refrain from selling, pending the financial reconstruction of his administration.⁸⁵

Already, in compliance with a request made by the Khedive, a financial commission had been appointed by the British Government to examine the finances of Egypt in an effort to prevent the complete insolvency of that state.⁸⁶ This commission, headed by Mr. Stephen Cave, M. P., English Paymaster-General, was ready to start for Egypt at the end of 1875 with the double purpose of setting the Khedive's house in order and learning just what the position of the British Government was in Egypt since the purchase of the canal shares. While the study of the financial situation was in progress, Col. Stokes, a member of the financial mission, acted as the official representative of the British Government in coming to an agreement with the Canal Company concerning British representation in the Council and the Administrative Committee of the Company.⁸⁷ The Company had never acted officially on the matter of the Khedive's participation in the administration of the Suez Canal Company after the detaching of the interest-bearing coupons from his Canal shares. As a matter of courtesy he had been given representation in the Company's affairs, but not on a carefully defined basis. The position of the British Government with reference to the Company was a matter which had to be determined. On February 23, 1876, Col. Stokes succeeded in arranging with De Lesseps, who was then in Egypt, a protocol defining the position of the British Government. In this agreement, De Lesseps undertook to secure from the Khedive and the shareholders a modification of the statutes of the Company so that three British members might be admitted to the Council, and at the same time he promised informally to secure a place on the Committee of Direction for one of the three English members.⁸⁸ The recognition of British claims to the right of casting ten votes in the general meeting of shareholders, together with a large share in the direction of the Company's affairs, went

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17, 20-21. The Khedive was also informed that the British Government would view as an infraction of the Sultan's *firman* any attempt on his part to relinquish control of the canal as a part of the domain of Egypt. The Khedive did sell his 15% rights in 1880 to the *Crédit Foncier*, however. — *Annuaire Statistique*, 1914, p. 268.

⁸⁶ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXXVII, 278.

⁸⁷ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], p. 16.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1876, No. [C. 1525], pp. 14, 23-24.

far toward ending all British dissatisfaction with canal policy."³⁹ The great waterway had at last virtually achieved an international character, and although the majority of canal stock was still held by continental investors, Great Britain was thereafter conceded to have the leading political interests in the waterway.

Meanwhile, members of the British Cabinet found themselves under the necessity of explaining to Parliament the purchase of the canal shares and of securing a vote of funds for the carrying out of the contract into which they had entered without Parliamentary authorization. On February 14, 1876, the matter was first considered in a Committee of Supply. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, presented the whole of the shares transaction in masterly fashion, answering the critics of the purchase, pointing out that the terms were reasonable, and finally presenting a plan of payment for the shares which would place but a small burden on the state.⁴⁰ The motives under which the Premier and his confidantes acted were reviewed, and again it was shown that the purchase was merely a protective measure, to prevent hostile interests from obtaining a greater degree of control of the waterway, as well as to secure the privilege of transporting troops to India if and when necessary. "It has been said that what we should have to do in time of war as the owners of a certain number of shares would be to use force, which is precisely what we should have to do if we owned no shares at all," he pointed out.⁴¹

Further consideration of the matter was postponed a week. When, on February 21, the debate was resumed, Gladstone, who had strongly favored the canal during the period of construction and had not been averse from the investment of English money in it as a commercial enterprise, opposed finding the money for redeeming Disraeli's pledge. He attacked both the manner of the purchase and its results, holding that no real advantage had been obtained. Disraeli stoutly defended his action.

I have never recommended and I do not now recommend this purchase as a financial investment [he said]. . . I do not recommend it either as a commercial speculation, although I believe that many who have looked upon it with little favor will probably be surprised with the pecuniary results of the purchase. I have always and do now recom-

³⁹ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, No. [C. 1391], p. 24.

⁴⁰ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXXVII, 282-283.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

mend it to the country as a political transaction, and one which I believe is calculated to strengthen the Empire. That is the spirit in which it has been accepted by the country, which understands it. . . . They are really sea-sick of the "silver streak." They want the Empire to be maintained, to be strengthened, they will not be alarmed even if it is increased, because they think we are getting a great hold and interest in this important portion of Africa, because they believe that it secures to us a highway to our Indian Empire and our other dependencies. . . .⁴²

The press generally approved this speech, and the House of Commons, recognizing an obligation *de facto*, voted in supply on February 23 an appropriation of £4,080,000 for the purchase of the shares and the payment of attendant expenses.

The real debate on the Government's policy and on the disposition of the shares, however, came up in the Commons on August 8 in consideration of the proposed Suez Canal Shares Bill. By this time opinion both in and out of Parliament had come to a focus, and the probable bearing of the purchase of the shares on the future of British access to India had been variously estimated. On this occasion opponents of the Premier's action launched a heavy attack against the proposed Bill which was to define the Government's position as shareholder. These critics based their principal objections on the ground that in assuming a vast financial burden in the cost of the shares, the British Government had acquired no tangible advantages. The House was reminded that in 1871 three directorships in the Canal Company had been offered to Great Britain by De Lesseps when the Company was nearly at the end of its resources and was facing the necessity of selling out. What was offered then for English good will was now being purchased for upwards of four millions pounds sterling, and still the promised votes in the General Assembly of the Company were being withheld. It was also asserted that the Khedive, who was already bankrupt, could not pay the stipulated interest on the canal shares during the twenty-five years for which coupons were lacking. Other objections were raised to show that the very method of England's representation on the Suez Canal Board was irregular,⁴³ that in becoming a shareholder

⁴² *Ibid.*, CCXXVII, 441; Thompson, *Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield*, I, 249, 250; a good account of the strategic bearing of the canal is contained in the *Journal of the East India Association*, IX, 188-209.

⁴³ After the shares had been purchased, it was discovered that, in order to comply with the rules and regulations of the Company, each of the three directors would have to be provided by the Government with 100 shares. The relation of

in the Canal Company the Government would have to assume responsibilities which in time of war might prove embarrassing, and that the holding of the shares would not alone keep the route to the Indian Empire open. One of the Prime Minister's critics (Mr. Lowe) summed up the case by saying, "In short, now that the preliminary glory of the purchase was over, he would like to know what real advantage England gained by the purchase of these shares at all."⁴⁴

At the close of the long and rather acrimonious debate, Disraeli summed up the situation by stating that his critics were wrong in maintaining that England's interest in an institution could not be at the same time political and commercial. He insisted that such English directors as might have been admitted to the Canal Board in 1871 would not have had more than a fraction of the power of the existing ones, now that England controlled more than half of the canal. And a fellow Conservative even stated that the purchase of the shares had been necessary because of the false position assumed by the Ministry of Lord Palmerston — a tardy admission, and one which found no contradiction in the House now that "Palmy's" days of domination were ended.⁴⁵ It was already a foregone conclusion, with the temper of the country favorable to the transaction, that the pending Bill would be passed, and the vote justified the expectation.⁴⁶ For better, for worse, the British Government, after keeping its skirts clear of political entanglements in Egypt with scrupulous care for three quarters of a century, had at last accepted a definite responsibility which had been recommended by the Prime Minister on political grounds alone, and which was "calculated to strengthen the Empire."⁴⁷

The fact that the overland route through Egypt never became a major route of trade was due to no lack of commercial enterprise. Time and again since Warren Hastings' ill-fated venture of 1773 plans had been made for a regular exchange of goods to and from India by way of Egypt. Early attempts to realize these plans invariably failed. In early days sailing vessels found the Red Sea too difficult of navigation. Even the coming of the steamship made no vast difference because of the difficulties and expense connected with the transportation of goods across Egypt under handicaps furnished by bands of desert marauders, slow

the directors and their shares to the Company on the one hand and the British Government on the other was a rather nice question.

⁴⁴ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCXXXI, 831-835.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 850-851.

⁴⁶ *Parl. Pap.*, 1876, *Public Bills*, No. 189.

⁴⁷ *Quarterly Review*, LXV, 453-458.

and inefficient caravans, the whims of an oriental government, and a tropical climate. It was stoutly argued in the House of Commons, and for a while it was widely believed, that an Egyptian railway would revolutionize this route; that quick transit and low freight rates would result in turning the great stream of eastern trade to the Red Sea route. This, too, proved to be unrealized; bulky articles of trade could not endure the necessity of two transshipments *en route*, even though the distance traversed was nearly halved. With all of its advantages, therefore, the overland route could not compete with the Cape route as a commercial artery, although the sending of commercial papers and some quantities of valuable goods added much to its value as a highway for mails and passengers.

The opening of the Suez Canal created an entirely new situation. The overland route soon vanished and its place was taken by an all-water route possessing all the advantages of uninterrupted voyage plus a great saving in time, distance and expense. Delays in passing through the canal and high tolls together did not neutralize the advantages of the new route.⁴⁸ Trade was not long in finding the new channel. With the canal still far from complete, the year 1870 saw a fairly steady stream of maritime traffic. A total of 486 vessels, representing well over half a million gross tons, passed through the canal. Of these vessels nearly 75%, representing some 62% of the whole tonnage, were of British registry.⁴⁹ This was increased during 1871, in spite of the inefficient state of the canal, to 765 vessels, with a total tonnage of 1,142,200, about the same proportion of which was British.⁵⁰

By 1875 the number of vessels using the canal was about three times that of the year 1870, and the Canal Company were enabled to pay a first dividend of 5% on the capital stock, while setting aside funds for the improvement of the waterway. This rapid growth continued for a number of years. During the year 1880, 2016 vessels paid tolls on 3,069,642 tons of traffic, and already the facilities of the canal were being taxed. In 1883 the number had risen to the large total of 3307 vessels, with a tonnage of 5,776,426⁵¹ — practically all that the canal as then constructed

⁴⁸ James Douglas, *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India*, pp. 146, 147; Wm. H. Seward's *Travels Around the World* (Ed. by Olive Risley Seward, New York, 1873), pp. 519-526; *Quarterly Review*, CXLII, 429-457.

⁴⁹ F. de Lesseps, *The History of the Suez Canal: a Personal Narrative*, p. x.

⁵⁰ W. S. Lindsay, *History of Merchant Shipping*, IV, 613; *Statesman's Year Book*, 1873, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

⁵¹ *Suez Canal Traffic: Returns* (5 vols., London, 1881-1887), for the year 1884. About 80% of this was British shipping.

could accommodate. Indeed, that waterway became so congested that many shippers began to despair of making material saving in time by this route and began to return to the longer but more certain Cape route. For this reason, the number of vessels passing through the canal in 1884, 3284, showed a slight falling off in numbers, though not in total tonnage.⁵² A new Suez Canal question had arisen: within the space of fifteen years from the date of opening, the new waterway had become inadequate.

Soon after the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by the British Government, the question as to the necessary improvements in the channel, once the estimated maximum capacity of about 3000 vessels had been reached, began to receive serious consideration. Strong complaints were being registered by the end of 1881 by shipping interests, particularly in England, directed against the inadequacy of existing canal facilities, and demanding, now that the canal was paying as much as 16% in dividends,⁵³ that steps be taken to remedy the difficulty. Three general plans were proposed from various quarters as possible solutions: the enlargement of the existing canal, the construction of a second and parallel canal, or the building of an entirely new channel outside of the land controlled by the Suez Canal Company.⁵⁴ The last of these proposals gained little favor because of the widespread belief even in England that such an enterprise would infringe on the concessions of 1854 and 1855 as confirmed by the Sultan's *firman* of 1866. The second suggestion was supported by many engineers and other authorities on the ground that two channels would provide safer and more effective transit facilities than a single channel of equal width. However the Suez Canal Company was not prepared to supply the capital for such a new work, and it was given up.

Meanwhile the ship-owners of the United Kingdom were growing desperate in their demands for relief.⁵⁵ During the last quarter of the year 1883, they held frequent conferences with the officers of the Company and with the heads of the British Government. The representations made on these occasions resulted in a joint meeting of the leading British ship-owners with M. Charles de Lesseps, first Vice-President of the Company, on

⁵² *Suez Canal Traffic: Return for the year 1885*; Augustus Mongredien, *The Suez Canal Question*, pp. 3-4.

⁵³ Mongredien, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23. It was also suggested that an indirect channel be constructed from the Nile to the Red Sea and from the Nile to Alexandria, a proposal much like some which antedated the isthmian canal project. A ship railway, to haul vessels over the land, was also proposed. These do not appear to have developed beyond the stage of theory, however.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-11.

November 30, 1883, at the office of the Peninsular and Oriental Company in London. At this conference an agreement was reached as to the future policy of the Canal Company. The agreement in brief provided that the Company should enlarge the existing canal or provide a new one, that in addition to the three directors appointed by the British Government seven others be added from among English ship-owners, and merchants,⁵⁶ that an office of the Company be opened in London, that the remaining surtax, levied since 1873, be discharged, and that transit and operating charges of the canal be reduced in proportion to the earnings of the Company.⁵⁷

Most of these points were carried out as agreed upon. The last fifty centimes of surtax was removed from the tolls in January, 1884, leaving transit charges at the flat rate of ten francs per net register ton. This amount was gradually reduced according to a sliding scale as the Company's dividends increased, until in 1906 the rate stood at 7½ francs per ton.⁵⁸ Meanwhile the time required for the transit of the canal was reduced. For some years after the opening of the waterway at least sixty hours were consumed by a vessel in passing from one sea to the other. Improvements in the types of vessels using the canal effected speedier passages, but the necessity during these early years of tying up or anchoring vessels during the night continued to impede traffic. The installing of electric head lights on vessels in transit in 1887 made possible continuous passages and greatly shortened the time required. Further improvements to the same end now enable ships to pass through in about sixteen hours.⁵⁹

At the same time the stresses created by the opening of the canal were producing a veritable revolution in the shipbuilding industry. Since sailing vessels navigated the canal and the Red Sea only with the greatest difficulty, their construction rapidly fell off and steam vessels of new design replaced them. The effects of the canal in the sphere of shipbuilding were felt immediately.

In reference to the Suez Canal . . . [said Sir James Elphinstone in an address in 1871], we must take into consideration that the whole of our East Indian trade has been revolutionized by the opening of the Suez Canal. The ships

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-28.

⁵⁷ Nourse, *op. cit.*, pp. 121, 122.

⁵⁸ The ultimate minimum was fixed at 5 francs per ton.

⁵⁹ Sir Charles McLeod and A. W. Kirkaldy, *The Trade, Commerce, and Shipping of the Empire* (Vol. VII of *The British Empire* series, ed. by Hugh Gunn), (London and New York, 1924), p. 81.

in which we placed so much pride . . . are improved off the face of the earth. Trade with India, right or wrong, must fall into steam trade.⁶⁰

Changes in steamship design followed closely after.⁶¹ In spite of the fact that steam vessels had been in use for half a century, their evolution showed an increase in size rather than a change in principles of construction. The screw propeller had not yet found universal acceptance and most steamships were still equipped with sails with which to supplement their steam power. The most efficient use of the Suez Canal route called for a different type of steamer — one suited for navigation in European and oriental waters alike and with proportions suggested by the problems peculiar to the narrow channel of the canal.

This situation, which had not been foreseen, was boldly met by British mercantile concerns who gained on their foreign competitors by retiring or scrapping old types of vessels and by replacing them with others of new design. New types of propulsion machinery also were produced, characterized by high pressure boilers and compound engines, which resulted in more economical fuel consumption and more rapid sustained speeds without the use of sails.⁶² Steamships in use in 1870 rarely displaced more than 4000 tons. By 1890 Indian and Australian mail steamships frequently attained a size of 8000 tons, while by 1914 they had grown to 20,000 tons and more, embodying every improvement known to maritime science.

In this fashion the improvements consequent upon the canal reacted to compel further changes in the canal itself. The discussions of 1883 resulted presently in the adoption of the plan of widening and deepening the original channel. This process, once begun, has been several times repeated as steamships have grown in size and number. From the original dimensions of 72 feet bottom and 150 feet surface width with a depth of less than 26 feet, the canal has been enlarged in successive stages until it now measures 147 feet at the bottom and 240 feet at the surface of the cuts with a depth of 34½ feet. This is sufficient to accommodate vessels of 30,000 tons, although it will not admit the very largest steamships, and additional enlargements of the channel will soon be made.⁶³

⁶⁰ Sir James Elphinstone, "A Ship Canal between India and Ceylon," March 28, 1871, in the *Journal of the East India Assn.*, V, 40.

⁶¹ Lindsay, *op. cit.*, III, 618-619; Charles Roux, *op. cit.*, II, Ch. 13.

⁶² *The Blue Peter*, I, p. 68; *The P. & O. Pocket Book*, 3d issue, pp. 12, 13.

⁶³ Steamship companies regularly using the canal still take its physical limitations into account in designing their vessels.

These improvements are indicative both of the volume of trade and the type of vessels employing the canal. In 1913, 5085¹ vessels, with a total tonnage of 20,214,856, passed through the canal, an average of fourteen vessels per day throughout the year. This was nearly as much traffic as the canal authorities then could manage, although the necessity of using sidings for the passage of vessels bound in opposite directions was long ago obviated. Constantly increasing depths of channel have been made necessary not so much by merchant vessels, which appear to have reached their maximum size some years ago, as by mail and passenger steamships which continue to grow. The World War considerably reduced the business of the canal for several years, though the revival of trade has been very rapid of late.⁶⁴

The purchase of the Suez Canal shares was looked upon by some of the more optimistic exponents of the Government's policy as the last step in the long struggle to control or at least make safe the principal route to India, China, and Australia. The opponents of the purchase were convinced that such definite venturing into Egypt would produce nothing but trouble; intervention in the Khedive's affairs, loss of the friendship of the Sultan, diplomatic entanglements with other European Powers, and all without tangible gain. Events were to show that the more gloomy outlook, while not being realized immediately, was on the whole well taken. Having taken hold of the tiger's tail, Britain could not let go, though were it not for the constant necessity of preserving a wide margin of safety for the canal itself, Egypt must have been entirely abandoned to its own improvident ways and the fickle guardianship of the Porte long before the opening of the twentieth century.

One of the earliest indications that the purchase of a large interest in the Suez Canal would lead to new political relationships was to be found in a Bill brought forward in February, 1876, to add to the titles of the Queen that of "Empress of India." The significance of this move could not be misunderstood, nor were statements wanting to elucidate it. In answer to the strong opposition which developed to the measure on its first reading, Disraeli said (March 9, 1876):

. . . It is desired in India. . . It is anxiously expected. . . Let the people of India feel that there is a sym-

⁶⁴ A good numerical picture of the effect of the War on canal traffic is contained in the *Annual Return of Shipping, Cargo and Passenger Traffic in the Ports of Egypt and Suez Canal Transits*, issued by the Ports and Lighthouses Administration, Statistical Office (Cairo, 1922), pp. 45-47.

pathetic chord between us and them, and do not let Europe suppose for a moment that there are any in this House who are not deeply conscious of the importance of the Indian Empire. . . . By passing this Bill . . . the House will show, in a manner which is unmistakable, that they look upon India as one of the most precious possessions of the Crown, and their pride that it is a part of her Empire and governed by her imperial throne.⁶⁵

This position was further elaborated in a speech of the Prime Minister made on March 23, in connection with the third reading of the Bill:

The frontiers of Russia, I will not say a rival Power, but the frontiers of Russia are only a few days' march from those of her Majesty in India. . . . This announcement . . . will signify in a manner which cannot be mistaken, that the Parliament of England is resolved to uphold the Empire of India.⁶⁶

In spite of strenuous objections to the Bill on the grounds that it was unconstitutional, inexpedient, and unæsthetic, it was passed and received the royal assent.⁶⁷ An Empire had been created which depended for its very existence upon the maintenance of a line of communications which crossed the Isthmus of Suez within the domain of the Khedive of Egypt.

The Royal Titles Act, following closely after the purchase of the canal shares and the sending of a financial mission to Egypt, was looked upon by many as a preliminary move toward British annexation of Egypt. Certainly English attitude toward both Egypt and Russia underwent a considerable change as a result of the events of 1875-1876. The "highway to India" received attention which had been denied it since its first establishment.

It is now fully recognized [said a contemporary] that the Canal must be held by England, and will be protected from the land. We cannot run the possible risk of some future Egyptian ruler becoming the ally of an enemy who, before we could take measures for protecting it, might render our road to India useless for an indefinite period. . . .⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, CCXXVII, 1727; T. E. Kebbel, *Selected Speeches of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield* (2 vols., London, 1882), II, 239.

⁶⁶ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, CCXXVIII, 450; Thompson, *op. cit.*, I, 273.

⁶⁷ Thompson, *op. cit.*, I, 272.

⁶⁸ A supposed plot had just been uncovered to destroy the canal by blowing in the banks with nitroglycerine. This was thought by some to have been conceived in Russia. The incident caused no little excitement in English circles.

I can not too strongly insist that the possession of Gibraltar, of Malta, or of Aden, is as nothing in comparison with our holding the Canal itself and making it strong.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, the continued development of Russian railways in Central Asia,⁷⁰ and more particularly the belligerent plans of Russia in connection with the Bulgarian uprisings in 1875-6, led to a new wave of hostility to Russia in which possible danger to the Suez Canal played a prominent part. The Russian declaration of war against Turkey on April 24, 1877, greatly increased the apprehension for the safety of the canal, as Egypt, a part of the Ottoman Empire, might come within the area of hostilities. On May 6, Lord Derby despatched a note to the Russian Court defining British interests in Egypt and elsewhere in the Near East. Russia was warned that any attempt to block or intercept the communication between Europe and the East by the Suez Canal would be regarded as a menace to India, and would be inconsistent with the maintenance by England of a policy of passive neutrality. Furthermore, it was stated that European economic interests in Egypt were so extensive that an attack on Egypt or even a temporary occupation would not be regarded with unconcern by England, while Russian occupation of Constantinople or of the region bordering on the Persian Gulf was definitely proscribed.⁷¹ The penalty for violation of these conditions, it was understood, would be the sacrifice of British neutrality. A tense moment was greatly relieved when M. Gortchakov, the Russian Ambassador, signified the willingness of his Government to abide by the stipulated terms during British neutrality.⁷²

In spite of widespread feeling in England that Russia's war with Turkey was a war on England's ally,⁷³ England was "called on to decide whether out of the wreck she will take Egypt."⁷⁴ The mobilization at Malta of a considerable number of Indians brought out by way of the Suez Canal⁷⁵ suggested an affirmative answer, but the war ended with Egypt still a part of the Sultan's

⁶⁹ An Englishman, *England in Egypt: the Highway to India; A Proposal submitted to the People of England*, pp. 5-7.

⁷⁰ James Long, "The Eastern Question in its Anglo-Indian Aspect," in the *Journal of the East India Assn.*, X, 223-269. See the *Calcutta Englishman* for Aug., 1876.

⁷¹ Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, IV, 2615-2617.

⁷² *Ibid.*, IV, 2624-2627.

⁷³ Sir Henry Havelock, in the *Fortnightly Review*, XXVII, 119.

⁷⁴ Edward Dicey, in *ibid.*, XXVIII, 422-434.

⁷⁵ George Foggo, "The Employment of Indian Troops in Europe," in the *Journal of the East India Assn.*, XI, 152-183; *London Times*, 18 April, 1878; Thompson, *op. cit.*, II, 211, 415-416.

domain and only Cyprus to guard the eastern highways. The annexationists, and they were many, now that France was still laboring under the effects of her late defeat by Prussia, were gravely disappointed, but they did not give up hope of seeing Egypt become a part of the British Empire. A circumstance that lent them considerable encouragement was the fact that the Khedive, as many had anticipated, was unable to keep pace with his obligations, and the possibility of the restoration of his credit began to appear exceedingly remote.

Proposals brought forward in 1876 to unify and consolidate the Khedive's debts, which might have given an opportunity for financial rehabilitation, had already largely fallen through.⁷⁶ In March, 1877, so much pressure was brought to bear on the Khedive that he was obliged to issue a decree creating a board of commissioners to examine the general state of his finances. This commission of six members, representing Great Britain, France, and other interested states, reported in August, 1878, that because of the continuance of waste and inefficiency of the Khedive's administration, only a permanent board of experts, in charge of all branches of Egyptian administration, could possibly save the country.

Action upon this report was practically obligatory. With greatest reluctance, therefore, Ismail filled some of the more important ministerial offices with British and French experts, and then assiduously devoted himself to the congenial task of bringing discredit upon them. So successful was he in this effort that in April, 1879, his foreign ministers felt it incumbent upon them to resign, leaving the Khedive again sole master of affairs. During this whole period the Khedive's extravagances continued as unbridled and as imposing as ever. The end, however, came with unexpected suddenness. In place of the intervention of Britain and France, who had thus far considered themselves the principal arbiters of Egypt's destinies, came the ultimatum of Prince Bismarck, demanding of the Porte the immediate deposition of Ismail, with active intervention in Egypt as the alternative. Coming at a time when the German Empire was not suspected of having imperialistic ambitions, this fiat gave a profound shock to the whole of Europe, and to none more than Britain and France. As the only feasible course of action left, these Powers hastened to join in the German demand, and the Porte was constrained to act accordingly. Late in June, 1879, Ismail was apprised of his removal and of the appointment of his son Tewfik as Khedive in his stead.

⁷⁶ Documents are given in McCoan, *op. cit.*, pp. 393-409.

The change of régime under pressure enabled the Powers to effect the establishment of a joint financial administration for the new Khedive.⁷⁷ This Dual Control, which to all intents and purposes made the Khedive the ward of Great Britain and France while leaving him otherwise in possession of the usual powers, in spite of some handicaps, promised at the outset to solve the principal difficulties and to obviate the need of further participation in the affairs of Egypt. Its duration, however, was destined to be brief. The circumstances which brought about its termination and inaugurated an entirely new phase in the history of Egypt grew out of a series of local difficulties in the Egyptian army which had little, if any, intrinsic significance. The setting was simple. Upon the deposition of Ismaïl, the Egyptian army was reduced from 45,000 to 18,000 men, which created a large group of disaffected soldiers open to sedition.⁷⁸ Among the many chronic plotters connected with the army was an officer of peasant origin, Ahmed Arabi, who, being at once aggressive, fickle, and unwise, easily fell into the bad graces of the Government and relied on his personal popularity with the military to extricate himself. After several clashes with both Ismaïl and his successor, in which Arabi was victorious, the situation came to a head in the early months of 1882 when the disaffection in the army began to take on a certain crude national character and as such endangered lives and interests of Europeans.

In May, 1882, an understanding between the English and French Governments led to the sending out to Egypt of a joint naval expedition intended to exert a moral influence and to protect European residents in Egypt. This had the effect of precipitating the whole movement, which up to this point had been personal and aimless. It needed only a riot in Alexandria on June 11 to provoke a race war. The attempt of the Turkish Government to take matters in hand only added fuel to the fire. With all law and order suspended, the British Government believed the time had come for the employment of external force. In this the French would not join, either because of unwillingness to follow English lead or lack of inclination to embark on a course which might have involved consequences.⁷⁹ On June 11, Admiral Seymour, in charge of the British fleet at Alexandria, determined to hesitate no longer. The French, informed of his intentions, withdrew their vessels, and the British alone commenced the bom-

⁷⁷ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXX, 623-624, *passim*.

⁷⁸ A good account of these developments is contained in Weigall, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 ff.

⁷⁹ Jean Darcy, *France et Angleterre: Cent Années de Rivalité Coloniale*, pp. 359, 360.

bardment of the forts at Alexandria, an act which committed them irrevocably to a large responsibility for conditions in Egypt in future.

A week later preparations were far advanced for placing a British army in Egypt to restore order. The Turkish Government raised no objections, but the French remained coldly aloof. One of the first steps toward reducing the Egyptian forces was the seizure of the Suez Canal, in the face of the most determined opposition from De Lesseps and other officials of the Suez Canal Company, who openly sympathized with Arabi since the French fleet had been withdrawn.⁸⁰ Not troubling to determine what difficult international questions were being raised, British transports were taken through the canal and troops landed at Ismailia, although the canal dues were punctiliously paid. The dispersal of the Egyptian army and the capture of Cairo were quickly effected by English forces, which scarcely needed the units which had meanwhile come out from India to take part in the imperial adventure.

These events required a new definition of policy. Early in 1883 Gladstone, the "Little Englander," declared it to be the intention of Great Britain to reseal the Khedive, reconstitute the country, and then to withdraw completely, leaving the future of Egypt to her own people. While there is no need to question the sincerity of this plan, its realization was made impossible by new and grave crises. An emergency arose in the Sudan. This region had long been subject to Turco-Egyptian authority, but, since the deposition of Ismail, had fallen under the control of a religious fanatic known as the Mahdi. After the pacification of Egypt in 1882, it became necessary for British forces to extend the *pax Britannica* to the Sudan to insure their work in Egypt. The conquest of the Sudan, undertaken in half-hearted fashion under a ministry strongly opposed to such distant enterprises, was poorly managed. The destruction of an expeditionary force in 1883 and the death of Gordon at Khartum in 1885 were the evidences of bungling at home, but at least they demonstrated the necessity of continuing the occupation of Egypt.

Meanwhile, British withdrawal from Egypt grew more and more hypothetical. As the Suez Canal yearly became more vital to English political and commercial interests, fewer risks could be taken for its safety and control.⁸¹ Moreover, Egypt itself, and later the Sudan, became enmeshed in the English economic sys-

⁸⁰ Weigall, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.

⁸¹ See Étienne Martin, *L'Angleterre et le Canal de Suez: La Question d'Égypte* (Paris, 1892), Introduction; *Parl. Pap.*, 1905, No. [C. 2409], Egypt No. 1, p. 2; *Quarterly Review*, CLXV, 438-467.

tem to such an extent as to counsel no haste in carrying out the promise of withdrawal.⁸² The very fact of possession eventually argued its own justification. Rival powers presently found compensation elsewhere: France in Tunis, and, after the Fashoda incident, in Morocco; Germany in newly opened African regions; Russia in northern Persia and eastern Asia. Long before the opening of the World War and the establishment of a British protectorate in Egypt, that region on the map had taken on the color of red; its retention for the protection of investment both in the East and in the Nile basin was everywhere taken as a matter of course.

Even the long-debated problem of the international status of the canal was satisfactorily worked out. In 1885 an informal arrangement was reached toward neutralizing the waterway,⁸³ and in 1888 an international congress at Constantinople, representing nine of the Powers most interested in the canal, drew up a Convention, dated October 29, providing that the canal should "always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag."⁸⁴ This, of course, did not alter the position of Great Britain as the guardian of the canal.

A long period of international peace after the Congress of Berlin of 1878 made special precautions for the safety of the canal unnecessary. The opening of the World War necessitated both the taking of precautionary measures for the safety of the canal and the ending of the anomalous position of Great Britain in Egypt. Upon the entrance of Turkey into the war as an ally of the German Empire, the British "occupation" of Egypt came to an end, and in December, 1914, a British protectorate was proclaimed. An attack on the canal by Turkish forces in 1914-1915, as a part of the war plans of the German General Staff, while easily repulsed, at least succeeded in preventing a concentration of British forces on the western front at a critical time, since approximately 150,000 imperial troops were detained in Egypt. The disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915 may be considered as a monument to the firm purpose of safeguarding eastern lines of communication.

The relative tranquillity of Egypt during the World War gave no sign of new problems which were to follow closely after. Post-war psychology together with the new doctrine of the rights of small peoples combined to breed in Egypt something more akin

⁸² G. L. Beer, *African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference*, pp. 306-328, *passim*.

⁸³ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXXVI, 345-351; Charles-Roux, *op. cit.*, II, 389-393.

⁸⁴ *Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LXXIX, 18; W. B. Munro, "The Neutralization of the Suez Canal," in *Annals of the American Academy*, XVII, 409-430.

to a national spirit than had ever appeared during the revolt of Arabi Pasha. Indeed, so threatening did the movement become that, being constantly reminded of the engagements given when Egypt was first occupied, the Protectorate was given up in November, 1921, and on March 15, 1922, a limited monarchy was established.⁸⁵ Ahmed Fuad, already recognized as Sultan, became the first king under the new régime.⁸⁶ Even this, however, did not mean the complete withdrawal of England from Egypt. In the form of a treaty with the new kingdom, British interests are still guarded and certain rights of intervention are recognized.⁸⁷ The Anglo-Egyptian Convention of November, 1921, contained a provision that —

For the discharge of . . . obligations and for the due protection of British Imperial Communications, British forces shall have free passage through Egypt, and shall be maintained at such places in Egypt and for such periods as shall from time to time be determined. They shall also at all times have facilities as at present for the acquisition and use of barracks, exercise grounds, aerodromes, naval yards and naval harbours.⁸⁸

In such manner has the Suez Canal justified its appellation of a "second Bosphorus." It is undoubtedly the most important of the world's waterways. In the words of Sir Charles Dilke, an undersecretary of the Foreign Office —

. . . The Canal is the principal highway to India, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and British Burmah, where 250,000,000 people live under our rule, and also the China where we have vast interests and eighty-four per cent of the external trade of that still enormous empire. It is also one of the roads to our Colonial Empire in Australia and New Zealand.⁸⁹

It can scarcely be matter of wonder that concern for this highway, which has thus far scarcely required an alternative route between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, is a key to British foreign policy.

⁸⁵ *Parl. Pap.*, 1921, Egypt No. 1, No. [C. 1131].

⁸⁶ *New York Times, Current History*, XVI, 808-809.

⁸⁷ There are those who still maintain, as many did during the past century, that the annexation of Egypt is the only logical solution of the Egyptian Question. See the *Nineteenth Century*, C, 635-636.

⁸⁸ *Parl. Pap.*, 1921, No. [C. 1555], Egypt No. 4, p. 4; *ibid.*, 1922, No. [C. 1592], Egypt No. 1, pp. 30-31.

⁸⁹ *Hansard's Parl. Deb.*, 3d Ser., CCLXXII, 1719. See *The Nation*, CIX, No. 2827.

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